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AUGUST 1955 VOL. V, NO. 2

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* IRVING KRISTOL

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This Month's *ENCOUNTER* :—

IN HIS article on the French intellectuals, Herbert Luthy quotes a passage from Simone de Beauvoir's latest novel, *Les Mandarins*, in which the protagonist reflects bitterly on the condition of the writer in post-war France. It concludes with these sentences: *"What a derisory triumph, to be a great writer of Guatemala or Honduras! Yesterday he had thought himself the inhabitant of a privileged part of the world, from which every sound reverberated through the entire globe; but now he knew that all his words died at his feet."* It is a poignant sentiment, even if in this particular context it does seem to have an irony that was never intended. The person who utters this lament is recognisably modelled on a playwright-novelist-moralist whose words, instead of dying at his feet, go forth and multiply in almost every known language; and Mme de Beauvoir's novel will itself doubtless survive a crossing of the Channel, to say nothing of a first-class passage across the Atlantic.

By reason of the natural cupidity of publishers, there are probably fewer writers whose words die at their feet than Mme de Beauvoir would have us believe. Nevertheless, they do exist. Most of us have, at one time or another, encountered people who indignantly insisted that some writer (in Hungarian, Serbian, Czech, Portuguese, Bengali, Urdu, etc.), whose name we may have not so much as heard of, must be classified among the truly great. We should like to think that we would not the less admire Conrad, Rilke, and Joyce had they written in Polish, Slovenian, or Erse. In fact, the chances are fair that we would never have read a page by them. One often hears a great deal of romantic eloquence about the fortunate position of the writer who is part of an "organic community" rather than of a megalopolis; who is "close to the people" rather than alienated, lonely, forsaken in the city; who can command the natural resources of a folk-language rather than having to fight incessantly against the debasement of words that is characteristic of a cosmopolitan (and therefore commercial) environment. These are highly attractive notions, indeed—as they ought to be, having been invented by some of the best minds in London, Paris, Moscow, and New York. The brutal fact is that an author is luckier to have been born into a large community, which possesses a world-language, than into one that is cosy and parochial.

Even more than money, writers want eternity—to leave an impression on the world that all time's calamities will never completely efface. They may not wish to change the world in any strict political sense, but they at least want the universe to have gained a newer and different consciousness of itself, by virtue of their having written. And to obtain this it is almost necessary, in our age, to be a member of a national community that has, along with whatever moral and æsthetic excellences, the quite vulgar quality of being in some degree powerful—of being regarded attentively by the world and, most important, listened to. The existence of such a community seems to be a precondition for the emergence of a national literature sufficiently large in extent and weighty in substance to fix the world's eye and give shape to the world's imagination; and participation in such a national literature seems, as a rule, to be a precondition for a writer's leaving his mark. To be sure, there are exceptions to this generalisation, but they are not so numerous they cannot be counted.

To him that hath shall be given, and it is all very unjust. Why it should be this way is so unanswerable a question as almost to constitute a major metaphysical problem. What is the secret communion between the fortunes of history and the fate of literature? Is it that writers in history-making countries are emboldened to approach the greater themes? Do they possess a richer stock of that sacred egoism—the sense of a predestined vocation—which is so indispensable to the act of creation? Or is it simply a human weakness in the smaller, more passive nations—do they allow themselves to be intimidated by the claim of the more powerful to have pre-empted the future, *their* future? In the abstract, there is no reason why the high and mighty of this world should not sit at the feet of Guatemala or Honduras (or Switzerland

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or Belgium), looking to it for instruction and inspiration; but they do not, and no one expects them to.

But, unjust and unreasonable as all this is, there is yet a kind of poetic justice in it. One cannot forget that it was the writers themselves who helped call into being this thing called "national literature." At first, their activity had a pleasing artlessness about it, and appeared as but the necessary accompaniment to the rise of secular sovereignties out of the ruins of medieval Christendom. Later, under the spell of the Romantic movement, moribund languages were revived, new national epics were composed for nations that as yet barely existed, while literature enthusiastically ascribed to the idea of national existence the most supernatural virtues. St. Augustine was a Berber, St. Thomas an Italian, Copernicus a Pole, and Leibniz a German—how little it then mattered! Today, in contrast, new national literatures are being manufactured by every community that can manage to do so—in India, Burma, Ceylon, Africa, Israel, Indonesia, Eire, and elsewhere. If history is kind to them, they may look forward to a longer or shorter period of domination; if not, they—or most of them—will have to swallow the indignity of seeing their words die at their feet.

In a period when the nation-state has plainly become a vicious anachronism, the relation of a nation to its literature has become ever more possessive, and a mild chauvinism has become so habitual to men of letters that it passes without notice. Americans, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Italians—everyone is worried about "their" literature: not whether it is good, but whether it is impressive. "*What a derisory triumph to be a great writer of Guatemala or Honduras!*" What, one wonders, is so derisory about it? Ought one to prefer to be a mediocre writer in Russia or the U.S.? The answer, alas, is yes—as long as the world is so constituted as to be nothing but an aggregate of more or less powerful Guatemalas and Hondurases.

NOTES ON OTHER CONTRIBUTORS:—

HERBERT LUTHY's book, *The State of France*, will be published in the near future by Secker and Warburg. . . . LESLIE A. FIEDLER is chairman of the Department of English at the University of Montana. . . . RICHARD WRIGHT's most recent novel, *The Outsiders*, was published by Angus and Robertson. . . . STUART HAMPSHIRE is a Fellow of New College, Oxford. . . . COLIN CLARK is Director of the Institute of Research in Agricultural Economics. . . . GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB is the author of *Lord Acton: A Study in Conscience and Politics* (Routledge, 1953). . . . GEORGE MIKES' *Little Cabbages*, a not too solemn report on France, was published this past spring by Allan Wingate. . . . O. H. BRANDON is the *Sunday Times* correspondent in Washington. . . . DAVID DAICHES is University lecturer in English at Cambridge.

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Herbert Luthy

The Intellectuals

IV: France

FRANCE is emphatically not one of the countries in which the word "intellectual" has an ironic or derisive connotation. In the course of French history it has, however, acquired a very definite ideological coloration. The "intellectual" is quite naturally linked to the Left—with all the infinite vagueness that belongs to the idea of Left in France: Reason and the Encyclopædia, Progress and the Republic. . . . Nowhere else do the intellectuals still form a kind of closed society, a *corps constitué*—a mandarinate—as they do here. The famous "Manifesto of the Intellectuals" of 1898, with which at the height of the Dreyfus Affair the representatives of the critical intellect declared war on the supporters of tradition and authority, and which for decades fixed the meaning of the word "intellectual," was essentially a manifesto of the École Normale Supérieure, that official nursery of the enlightened, republican French spirit. In that great moment, the whole French Left rallied round the venerable institute on the Rue d'Ulm, and the loyalties that were then forged remained alive right down to the years of the Second World War.

Of course, any such claim to a monopoly of intellect has an element of usurpation. Even the most traditional of the anti-Dreyfusards had their intellectual standard-bearers, not only the great names of the academic nobility, the de Broglies, de Vogüés, and d'Haussonvilles, but also the brilliant writers and journalists around Barrès, among whom Charles Maurras soon emerged as the unsurpassable embodiment of all those "deformations" which are usually attributed to "rootless intellectuals"—doctrinaire rationalism, abstract logomachy, and excessive systematisation. Every public polemic is necessarily conducted by intellectuals on both sides, and every ideology ever developed—even the most "anti-intellectual" doctrine of blood and soil—has been formulated and represented by intellectuals. But in France only the men of the Left—those jurors who sat on the Supreme Court of Reason and who were united in nothing but their antipathy to Authority and the Church—claimed the title of "intellectuals" for themselves, and it was a claim they were successful in establishing.

The hierarchy of intelligence and culture is organised differently in every country. In Germany the peak of Olympus is—or was—occupied by the professors; in America by the experts; in France—as befits a country in which literature is the public conscience, the public consciousness, and, in a famous phrase of Victor Hugo's, "civilisation itself"—by the writer. Not politicians or specialists but writers are, in France, the supreme oracles on public affairs. The phrase, "*littérature*

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engagée," was created by the writers and journalists of the Resistance who for a few years dominated the literary and political scene; and it was finally degraded into the catchword of a clique. But the thing itself is old; since the 18th century, every major French writer has been an "*écrivain engagé*." Diderot, Voltaire, Chateaubriand, Hugo, Renan, Zola, Péguy, and Gide were no less "engaged" than Sartre and his disciples, and no one finds it extraordinary that a Nobel Prize winner for literature, François Mauriac, should appear every week as a political journalist who polemicises against Deputies and Ministers. Here the humanistic hierarchy of values has remained unshaken; like the princes of the Renaissance, though far more humbly, every French statesman, general, or diplomat strives after the laurels of literary success as the supreme justification of his public life. It is not yet certain that history will say of General de Gaulle, "What a great commander!" or "What a great statesman!" —but how much more important it seems to him that history should say, "What a great stylist!"

In France it is the *homme de lettres* who issues authoritative dicta on the political and social questions of the day—not as an expert, but as a moralist. The political republic is still subject to the moral guardianship of the republic of letters. It is a state of affairs that astounds and fascinates literary men from countries less given to ideocracy. But if the representatives of the French republic of letters intervene in day-to-day politics, one should not forget that it is never merely the particular political issue that is under discussion. What is being enacted, rather, is an almost ritual confrontation between different conceptions—whose roots go deep into the past—of what "the real France" consists of. It is a struggle over ultimate symbols far more than a struggle over proximate realities.

The Lost Utopia

IN SO FAR as the clash between Vichy and the Resistance was a matter of internal politics—and it was this to so great an extent that defeat, occupation, and liberation often seemed only the occasion and pretext for the settling of old scores—it reproduced in a striking manner the opposing line-up of the Dreyfus Affair. For the republic of letters, the liberation of France was a seizure of power by the "intellectuals," in the exact sense of the 1898 manifesto; and here the "revolution" was more radical and more ruthless than in the political republic. Publishing houses, presses, newspapers, and magazines were confiscated by the intellectual Resistance groups, the "collaborationist" writers were condemned to professional death (i.e. denied the right to publish), and a book or a bit of film criticism had less chance of escaping the vengeance of the victors than fortunes made on the Atlantic Wall or the exercise of police and policy-making functions in the Vichy government. In the measurement of crime and punishment, too, literature stood at the top of the hierarchy, far above politics and economics.

In the following years, this dominance of the intellectuals shared the fortunes of the ruling political Left; its inner convulsions and divisions were the same, and its ideology faltered before the same decisive issue: the "this-worldly religion" of Communism, in the face of which the Left intelligence was stricken with impotence in both its traditional functions—as critic of society and as prophet of utopia. Within its ideological frame of reference, the "positive values" it represented had been pre-empted by the Communist world-power, the myth of the Great Revolution had been incarnated (and perverted) by the Soviet Union; and as if overcome by dizziness, the intellectuals teetered on the rim of the extinct volcano of yesterday's utopia, while the public watched spellbound to see if they would fall in. In their polemic against the "anti-Communist intellectuals," Sartre and his friends were basically right when they insisted on the impossibility of a fundamental rejection of Communism that was not also, at the same time, a renunciation of the traditional ideas and conception of the French intelligentsia. ("We have the same values as a Communist

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. . . . We may think he compromises them. . . . But they are still ours.")

The whole spiritual atmosphere of the first post-war years was bewitched by this "dialogue of the intellectuals with Communism," a dialogue which was as fruitful as a conversation with a prison wall. The Communist contribution was, of course, limited to the monotonous repetition of a few slogans; but even the genuine, rational arguments which passed between the not-yet Communists and the no-longer Communists—the "sympathisers" who stood hesitant, fascinated, and shuddering, before the gates of the Party, and the "renegades" who had the fall from innocence behind them—took the form of two endless monologues in different languages about completely different things. For one side, what was involved was the defence of an ideological frame of reference without which its spiritual world seemed to come apart; for the other what mattered was the analysis and exposure of the Communist reality—by which they at once ceased to be "intellectuals" in the received sense.

For ten years, the French intellectuals discussed the great questions of the age before a mirror, so to speak, and what they were looking for was not objective knowledge but the striking of a proper attitude—the right traditional posture. The "testament," the "personal document" which, almost without literary transposition, reproduced the author's more or less profound reflections as he read his daily newspaper, the diary published day by day, and journalism *tout court* became the dominant forms of this literature of men who were so busy keeping up appearances that they barely had time to formulate their thoughts, far less to organise them. Through all the events of the post-war era, the aim was to preserve one's good conscience and intellectual balance by carefully measured protests against tyranny in Spain and tyranny in Czechoslovakia, race discrimination in America and forced labour in Russia, executions in Persia and executions in Budapest. In the end, everything that happened in some part of the world came to be viewed in terms of an Incarnate Reason busy with the supreme problem of its own consistency. The one theme of "*littérature engagée*" finally became—itself; and "*engagement*" ended in solipsism. Jean-Paul Sartre especially, even in his polemics and his plays, never had any other subject or any other conversation-partner but himself; and there sprang up in his wake a whole literature, written by intellectuals for intellectuals about intellectuals, in which every ripple in the local pond became a stage in the development of the Human Spirit.

THIS post-war period, which in literature ran its course under the sign of the twin constellation Sartre-Camus, came to its end in the fall of 1952 with a bitter and rancorous polemic between the two men, of which Sartre remarked with foresight that it would look to a detached observer like a wrangle between Vadius and Trissotin, the two vain poets in Molière's *Femmes Savantes*. The whole choir of "unpolitical" writers, devoted merely to entertainment or to belles lettres—but also all those writers who had once compromised themselves with Vichy—triumphantly celebrated the débâcle of the "intellectuals," under whose moral authority they had chafed for so long. The purged of yesterday returned in triumph to the spotlight; it was the time of the rebirth of the non-ideological reviews, from the *Nouvelle Nouvelle Revue Française* to *La Parisienne*, and of the decline of the political-literary *revues engagées* of the type of *Les Temps Modernes* and *Esprit*. This literary counter-revolution corresponded exactly with the course of French post-war history in general; the "Antoine Pinay era" meant the collapse of the Resistance mythology in politics and literature; the death-agony of Gaullism; the beginning of disenchantment with Communism; the end of the inflation and of the great working-class strikes; and the evaporation of that apocalyptic mood in which the intellectuals had lived since the end of the war. Since then, Sartre has busied himself for more than two years—significant in itself of the ideological cul-de-sac in which he finds himself—in an interminable, fragmentary,

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and tangled exegetical effort to elucidate the significance of the last Communist essay in rowdyism: the miserably unsuccessful protest-demonstration of May 28th, 1952, against "*Ridgway la Peste*," which the Party itself condemned shortly afterwards as a "sectarian error," and which was long ago forgotten by everyone—everyone except Jean-Paul Sartre, who is still calling on world history, the Church Fathers, and Hegel's World-Spirit to prove that it was at that very moment, when the Proletariat refused to follow it, that the Communist Party embodied the Proletariat most completely, because most tragically.

More interesting, as well as more meaningful, is Albert Camus' tireless search for a more genuine utopia to replace the Communist-confiscated myth of the Great Revolution. His is an almost religious endeavour to snatch the "original truth" of the human rebellion against fate and injustice out of the hands of the false priests who have seized it. But the temple of a new Mediterranean sun-cult which Camus has raised on the rim of the burned-out crater of the Revolution is not yet a convincing piece of architecture.

To be sure, neither Sartre nor Camus has said his last word yet. As long as a writer is alive and working, his account remains open. But a literary decade in which these two names seemed the official representatives of the Zeitgeist has come to an end.

Self-portrait of the Mandarins

IT MARKS a kind of period after one of the most confused chapters of French literary history that Sartre's companion, Simone de Beauvoir, should have felt the time was ripe to write a history of this period in the form of a *roman à clef*. The title, *Les Mandarins*, exhibits a good deal more ironic detachment than the book itself. The documentary value of the novel, and its artistic failure, lies precisely in the fact that its author lacks all detachment from the group of intellectuals it portrays—all detachment, that is, but the instinctive detachment of a woman toward this species of men who spend all their time in general discussions, when they are not busy writing. The crapulous aspect of the book which made it a best-seller in France—a kind of Kinsey report on the sexual behaviour of the homo sapiens of Saint Germain des Prés—need not occupy us here. But the remaining two-thirds of this astonishing book consists chiefly of endless discussion between those writers who for a few years represented for the world the "new" spirit of France, and these conversations are so genuine—they are, indeed, genuine to the point of absolute dullness—that they read like stenographic reports. This is accompanied by a convenient and arbitrary distortion of the facts about her protagonists. The "poetic liberties" which Mme de Beauvoir allows herself with personages who were taken directly and very recognisably from life derive from that subtle art of polemical insinuation and misquotation which Sartre himself manipulates so brilliantly. Almost every one of the central figures of the novel can be immediately and unmistakably identified behind their transparent pseudonyms, and almost every situation corresponds to an actual occurrence; but everything is displaced, transposed, misdrawn, and adorned with invented or distorted episodes. (Not to speak of the painful tastelessness of the contrived happy ending, in which the narrator is left established as the wife of one of the two spiritual leaders of "*littérature engagée*"—who are now politically and personally reconciled—and the mother-in-law of the other.) This "historical document" must therefore be approached with caution.

But all the book's unreliability is made up for by the priceless naïveté with which, for hundreds of pages, the author earnestly and conscientiously reports the dullest and most threadbare of the clichés with which her intellectuals carry on their politico-philosophic arguments, never doubting for an instant either their importance or their profundity. Here she has really added nothing and subtracted nothing: this is exactly the way the Cold War, the Future of Mankind, Communism, Capitalism, and The Revolution were discussed and morally judged in these editorial offices—just so abstractly,

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just so foolishly, and with just such an absence of all knowledge and all serious analysis.

This unending monologue in an intellectual hothouse has an almost eerie unreality; there is a complete lack of contact with the present time or place. These revolutionary intellectuals seem to have no thoughts for the needs and problems of their own country, just emerging from war and disorganisation. All the discussions revolve endlessly about the single, decisive, fascinating, and insoluble question of whether entrance—or non-entrance—into the Communist Party is compatible with intellectual integrity. But about what goals are to be sought thereby, what changes striven for, what a Communist seizure of power would really mean for their country or even for their own lives—of this not a word. It is a purely symbolic action whose propriety or impropriety for intellectuals has been made into a theme for dialectical disputation. Not one of the contemporary problems of the political and economic organisation of France is mentioned even in passing; nothing moves these spirits but the Manichean duel of eternal principles, which is not even a conflict but a motionless, dramatic confrontation of light and darkness, good and evil, justice and injustice—and even this not as a confrontation within their own country, but as a distant gigantomachy whose protagonists are "Capitalism," personified in the United States, and "Communism," personified in the Soviet Union. For these intellectuals, who had set themselves the goal of overturning the world, the real France and the real Europe simply did not exist. What makes this all the more touching is their conviction that they are hardened political realists, for whom there is no worse insult than to be called "idealists," and who are ready to sacrifice all their ideas and values for the sake of "action"—an abstract action-in-itself about whose goals the reader remains completely in the dark.

IDEOLOGICAL casuistry is not a fertile soil for literature. Simone de Beauvoir's novel of ideas is at the same time a novel of idea-lessness that takes refuge in ideology. Its heroes are writers to whom nothing occurs but pamphlets and newspaper articles, because "politics" leaves them no time to think. In one of his weekly columns, François Mauriac recently raised the question—only immediately to answer it in the negative so far as he himself is concerned—of whether the entrance of the French writer into journalism did not have other grounds than the sheer impulse toward political activity.

> In the mixture of motives that drives us to act, let us not yield to the temptation to choose only those which flatter us. . . . Are we, in reality, fleeing from the work we have to do, or from an exhausted soil from which we no longer expect anything worth the effort? In that case, if we have become journalists it is not because our thirst for injustice has increased but our powers of creation have diminished.

This insidious question has never struck the heroes of "The Mandarins." They know exactly why nothing occurs to them any more: it is the result of their revolutionary sense of duty, their clear insight into the historical situation. "First we must win the struggle in the political field. . . . What must be avoided is the creation in the world of a war situation. . . . We must also avoid allowing this victory to be exploited by capitalism. . . . There are many things that must be prevented before we can amuse ourselves by writing books that no one, perhaps, will read," Dubreuilh, the philosopher and leader of the group, explains; and he refuses to publish the reminiscences he wrote during the war in order not to "furnish arms to Reaction." And the novelist-playwright-moralist Perron, in his turn, spends sleepless nights oppressed by the responsibility of his newspaper editorship.

> There had been no need for special competence to work in the Resistance and to found an illegal newspaper; he had thought things would go on like that. . . . But if he wanted to get to the bottom of things it would take him years: economics, history, philosophy, he would never be finished! Just to come more or less to terms with Marxism

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—what a task! There would be no question of writing any more.

And finally this central paragraph from a long conversation between the supreme mandarin and his wife, in which the doctrine of the *sacrificium intellectus* is formulated with an almost classic purity:

> Today the revolution is in the hands of the Communists, and in their hands alone; they will be found again perhaps, let us hope so; but if we persist in maintaining them, at this moment, we serve the counter-revolution. . . . I know very well that many things that were important to me are out of place now; I have come to wish for a future very different from the one I imagined; only I cannot change myself; and so I see no place for myself in that future.—In other words you hope for the victory of Communism, although you know that you could not live in a Communist world?—That's about it. I will write about that. That will be the conclusion of my book.

Thus, given his ideological frame of reference, within which the opposition "Russia-Communism-Revolution" and "America-Capitalism–Counter-revolution" marked the polarity of Left and Right, good and evil, the high mandarin of the French intelligentsia knew—or thought he knew—on which side his sympathies lay; but he could find no place there for himself or for "his values." And the Mandarin's France has shared his fate: it has become a no-man's-land which had no place in this post-war world. For if, as we have seen, the real France—its people, its institutions, and its problems—never appears in the political deliberations of its mandarins, there does flicker through this revealing book a strange, abstract France, an "Idea of France" with which the mandarins completely identify themselves, even with a considerable amount of intellectual chauvinism. And perhaps the key to the riddle lies here. For it would be easy to find a similar dissociation of the "Idea of France" from the prosaically real France in other writings of a very different tendency—perhaps most completely of all in the memoirs of General de Gaulle. How is it possible, one asks oneself, to venerate one's own country so completely as an Idea and yet despise its material reality so profoundly?

Prestige and the Intellectuals

IN THE endless monologue of the mandarins there sounds from time to time the discordant, sardonic voice of an uninvited guest, whose Mephistophelian features Mme de Beauvoir has painted with a loving hatred: Scriassine, the incarnation of the ex-Communist. In the opening pages he is already present, insinuating himself into the first New Year's celebration after the liberation of Paris to disturb the optimistic gathering with his message of doom. "The French intellectuals are in an impasse. . . . Their art, their thought, will only retain meaning if a certain civilisation succeeds in maintaining itself; and if they wish to save this civilisation, they will have nothing left to contribute either to art or to thought." The hostess sees through him immediately: an American agent! ("You don't mean that if there is a conflict you would wish for an American victory!") and there is no doubt about his evil intentions: "All Scriassine wanted was to silence the French writers." Nevertheless, this Cassandra evokes the fundamental theme of the whole book, which is nothing but a depiction of that impasse.

Intertwined with this episode there is a second one, whose real meaning is submerged in a waste of sentimental and erotic complications. In the last winter of the war, Henri Perron makes a much-envied lecture and vacation trip to Portugal—on behalf of the French Foreign Ministry, we learn quite incidentally. He brings back to the Ministry a memorandum from the Portuguese opposition which, betrayed to Salazar by the British and American capitalist, "places its one hope in France." A hundred pages later, a high official of the Quai d'Orsay, a former Resistance comrade, explains to him that this hope is completely unrealistic. "How can France do anything for Portugal, or for anyone else, when it can do nothing for itself?" And here an inner monologue follows which would be one of the best things in the book if Mme de

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Beauvoir did not have a mania for motivating every spiritual shock (including her own discovery that the Americans are fascists and warmongers) by a tedious erotic misadventure. The scene is Henri Perron's discouraged return from the Quai d'Orsay through the outwardly-untouched streets of Paris, which suddenly seems to him a ruined city:

> He crossed the street and leaned on the parapet of the quay. Seen from Portugal, France still kept the stubborn radiance of a dead star, and Henri had let himself be taken in by it. Suddenly he saw that he lived in the dying capital of a very small country. The Seine flowed in its bed, the Madeleine, the Chamber of Deputies were in their place, and the Obelisk too; one might have thought the war had miraculously spared Paris. . . . But in truth the proud city erected on the heart of the world had been annihilated. Henri was no longer anything but the unimportant citizen of a fifth-rate power, and *L'Espoir* nothing but a local gazette. . . . He opened the door of the restaurant and heard his name being whispered. Yesterday he would still have been flattered; now while he made his way through the crowd of habitués he was angered to think how he had let himself be duped by this shabby mirage; what a derisory triumph, to be a great writer of Guatemala or Honduras! Yesterday he had thought himself the inhabitant of a privileged part of the world, from which every sound reverberated through the entire globe; but now he knew that all his words died at his feet.

There is more in this inner monologue than patriotic grief or offended national pride. "France is our only hope"—that was the exhilarating message brought back by the travelling lecturers sent swarming into the world by the propaganda services of the French Government after the Liberation. The travelling salesmen of French prestige reaped a rich harvest, and feasted—in a kind of despairing self-intoxication—on the restored glory of the nation. In 1945, France no longer possessed anything but her historical and cultural prestige, and on that basis she undertook to build a world position. Measured by the diplomatic honours and privileges that were granted France in the councils of the victors, the attempt was successful; but the gap between the promise and the reality was too great, and the awakening was unavoidable—especially among the intellectuals themselves, who carried the "light of the dead star" into the world. For the prestige of that France which they served was their own personal prestige, that of the French spirit and of French literature. That, beyond this, the international weight of a nation should also be measured by its political, economic, and military strength came to them as a painful surprise, almost a barbaric insult.

The practice of sending intellectuals, writers, and artists abroad to add to one's national prestige has become common since the First, and even more so since the Second World War. But no other country—except perhaps for Spain within the limited orbit of *Hispanidad*—so invests its cultural missions with pathos as does France: the pathos of its claim to universality as "human civilisation" itself, its urge to the redemption and unification of mankind through the French spirit. The many-faceted and deeply-rooted conception of "the mission of France" manifests its continuity in a succession of avatars; from the Christian crusading idea of the "*Gesta Dei per Francos*," through the absolute monarchy's policy of cultural as well as military hegemony, up to and beyond the revolutionary imperialism of the Jacobins and the Empire. The power of this "French Idea" is precisely that it can take many forms and expressions—from the revolutionary "world-nation" to the policy of colonial assimilation; from the formation of an aristocratic élite to the message of liberty and equality proclaimed in the "principles of 1789"; from the enlightened rationalism of that France which proclaimed itself the "torch-bearer of Reason and Knowledge" to the world-spanning network of mission schools, officially fostered and protected even in the most anti-clerical days of the Third Republic—and even down to the prophetic anger of George Bernanos's last works, which summoned France to a crusade against the

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materialistic herd-philosophy of the machine age. Behind this "*rayonnement de la France*" stands not only a national personality which is culturally the most finished in the West, but also a mighty, centralised cultural apparatus, inherited from the age of absolute monarchy and extended afterwards with ever-increasing consistency, that has drawn the whole spiritual and artistic life of the country to Paris and placed it, directly or indirectly, at the disposal of the state.

FRANCE is the only country in which modern "cultural propaganda" is genuinely rooted in a great tradition which goes directly and unbrokenly back to the prestige politics of the Renaissance and the absolute monarchs. Francis I's "court of muses" and the "*magnificence*" of Louis XIV were nothing else, though they were directed at a more tightly-knit and selected society than modern propaganda can aim at. The conspicuous lavishness at official functions, the systematic cultivation of Europe's courtly society, the wooing of the élite with titles, honours, pensions, and sinecures—all this took up no smaller proportion of the hard-pressed budgets of the *ancien régime* than do the "*action artistique*," the "*expansion universitaire*," and the "*relations culturelles*" of the Fourth Republic. Napoleon I, who brought the Paris opera with him to his peace congresses, and Napoleon III, who built Paris into the cultural capital of the world, found faithful heirs in republican France; and the post-war period has brought this centralisation and state control to such perfection that it remains endurable only because of the political anarchy at the apex. All the strands of the nation's cultural life, the academies, art schools, libraries, research institutes and museums, the national and subsidised theatres, the orchestras, film studios, and publishing houses, converge like a spider's web at the Ministry of Education, which in turn has its subsidiary lines of communication to the authors' and composers' associations, the semi-official overseas organisations, and the Quai d'Orsay.

It would be astonishing if this century-old concern for self-advertisement and external splendour had not had some effect on the inner self-awareness of French civilisation. It has created a natural solidarity between the intelligence of the country and its national prestige which comes aggressively to the surface in times of crisis, and which even the most individualistic and nonconformist of intellectuals cannot escape, because it is not a question of solidarity with a régime or a form of government but with the "Idea of France," and with the primacy of French—and thus of his own—civilisation. Here there is not question of exclusion, just as in the French schools abroad there is never any conflict between Catholic and *laïque* tendencies. When Jean Cocteau, the nonconformist *par excellence*, becomes one of the official immortals of the Académie, when André Breton and his household demons, Lautréaumont and de Sade, are lectured on at the Sorbonne as classics of French literature, one thinks of an old phrase of Sartre's about the "nationalisation of the writer." And even the little *chansonnier* who appears in Brussels, the mannequin who travels to New York with the latest styles, the cook who works in London, or the governess who teaches manners to an Argentine millionaire's son—all feel themselves to be ambassadors of "*la chanson française*," "*le goût français*" and "*la civilisation française*."

At the core of the whole complex stands the French language itself. "Its credit will share the fortunes of our state," Montaigne remarked in one of his essays. It would be hard to find a similar remark in any other country of the 16th century. Fifty years later the French language had actually become a public institution, with its government council, the Académie Française, which codified and purified its vocabulary, and its legislators who laid down the rules of its grammar and syntax with the same pedantic thoroughness that the lawyers applied to the public life of the country. Perhaps the iridescent French "*esprit*" was always closely connected with this incomparable stability of its syntax—like the fixed, unalterable choreography of the ideological game to which it devoted itself

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—and even the hermetic, Expressionist, Dadaist, and Surrealist poets lived on the fixedness of the linguistic structure they undertook to shatter. This pre-eminence of the French language has survived French politico-military hegemony in Europe by a full century—the most fragile of all linguistic empires, because it rested neither on numbers nor extension, nor on commercial and technical superiority, but only on the prestige of the language itself and its intrinsic qualities. Even today, every position is still fought for in stubborn rearguard actions: in every new international organisation the struggle for pre-eminence is renewed; the growing use of English and of multilingual arrangements in international conferences is mourned as the decay of all diplomatic tradition and the source of Babylonian confusion; and in the day-to-day activities of French foreign policy, the conclusion of cultural accords which will assure the French language of first place, or at least most-favoured status, in the educational systems of other countries take precedence over such things as economic agreements and trade treaties.

It would be ridiculous to see in this a mere satisfaction of national vanity. The French linguistic *imperium* has for a long time now —for example, in a purely technical way, in the choice of diplomatic personnel—set a premium on a French education, an understanding of the French mentality, and it has created everywhere a fundamentally Francophile ambiance which is not without its political effect. Beyond this, the international supremacy of French taste, French fashion, and the French way of life were an economic factor of the first rank in their influence on tourism and on the luxury and fashion industries—all exports with an especially high margin of "increment-value."

The "Salvation of Man"

IT IS only with this background in mind that it becomes quite clear to what an extent France has been driven in the past fifty years to an almost desperate defence against all the fundamental tendencies of our time. Hers is an aristocratic, courtly, individualistic, and profoundly intellectual culture, in an age of industrial mass-civilisation in which the old cultured classes on whose influence French cultural hegemony rested have been, in part expropriated, in part destroyed, and everywhere dethroned. In Central and Eastern Europe, one of the oldest and best-organised of France's cultural spheres of influence, the landslide of the last two decades has taken with it not only the entire network of French institutes, schools, and cultural agreements, but the whole French-educated aristocracy. Even before the Second World War, the 18th-century-style cultural diplomacy of the French, which sought to counter the commercial and industrial superiority of Germany with literary *conférenciers*, had in the end reaped nothing but disappointments. In the remaining zones of influence that still exist outside the teetering colonial empire, in Latin America and the Near East, French prestige is engaged in a hard fight, not only with its old rivals, but above all with the industrial civilisation of America, which has a greater appeal to all "undeveloped countries" than French literature and French Egyptology. And here, too, that social reshifting has come into play which sweeps aside, together with the old leisured classes, all sympathy with the French model of civilisation. The age of social levelling, of the "common man," the demand for well-being and a share in the goods of civilisation for all, do not favour the world-hegemony of the French ideal of civilisation.

These are distant and underground processes, which seldom reach the consciousness of the average Frenchman, or even the average intellectual. But the calamities of this 20th century, which have swept the ground from under France's spiritual *imperium*, are also clearly visible in the daily life of the motherland; in a multitude of small occurrences on the most visible—and most sensitive —surfaces of existence. The most obvious—and also, for the artists and literati of Paris, the most irritating—symbol of this change is the transformation in the social and cultural structure of tourism. Even in the between-

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war period, which was itself only a dull reflection of the "*belle époque*," the foreign visitors to France came predominantly from the propertied and more or less aristocratic classes of Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, and even a "good old England" then still in existence. They all had at least some tincture of French culture, and they made it a point of pride to speak French and to show that they were connoisseurs of wine and literature, gourmets and *hommes d'esprit* in the French style. This clientèle has mostly disappeared. It is true that the worst crisis of the first post-war years has been overcome, but the new tourism of the "common man" —whose tone is set by the average American, the average Englishman, and lately by those tourists from what remains of Central Europe who are propelled through the country in busloads—possesses fewer of these distinctions. The new tourist does not step piously on to the holy soil of civilisation, but visits France as he would any other foreign country, finds ruined houses not historic but wretched, the sanitary facilities of the middling hotel inadequate, and the horde of tip-seeking lavatory-guardians oriental. He submits less and less often to the tyranny of the wine list and the menu, and it is the hotels and restaurants that now must suit *his* barbarous taste.

The little innkeeper, the dance-hall artist, the necktie-seller, and even the ladies of the Place Pigalle can see this "decline of the cultural level" in their own lives, and are only too quick to adjust to it. And the intellectual sees in it visible confirmation of what his "philosophy" tells him: in the day and night-life of Montmartre, as well as in the world-wide rearguard action of aristocratic taste, "Americanism" appears as the great enemy of the "French Ideal." A good many really hysterical outbursts, like the crusade against "Coca-colonisation," or the anger at an American-sponsored cultural festival in Paris—"*Messieurs, sur le plan de la culture, de la civilisation, de l'esprit, la France ne reçoit les conseils de personne; elle en donne!*" —can be explained by this irritation. Out of this deeply-wounded sense of national pride there has sometimes developed an intellectual chauvinism which can go to the wildest lengths of persecution mania; in the last few years, for example, writers and critics of repute have repeatedly developed the thesis that Shakespeare or Goethe were never really significant figures, and that their great names are the product of an "organised bluff" promoted by the Germans or the English in order to contest the legitimate pre-eminence of the French language and literature.

From this perspective, the impasse of Simone de Beauvoir's mandarins, and the tragicomedy of their search for something to replace their former certainties, are perhaps more understandable. For them the prestige of France—which was their own prestige—remained bound to the Jacobin myth of the Great Revolution; although France had long ago become a conservative country, forced to defend an old way of life and an old cultural heritage against the industrial revolution of modern times. The "Idea of France," whose once-revolutionary message they wished to go on proclaiming, had lost all relation to the real France. They could do nothing, ideologically, with the reality of France; and, at bottom, they wished to know nothing about it; it had nothing to do with their "French Idea." It was only in the rejection of "Americanism" that they found a—purely negative—contact with the real problems of France, and this negation became the one fixed point of their position. None of them was ever really excited or even genuinely interested by Russian Communism, and even the fate of the working class did not occupy too large a share of their thoughts. But frankly to oppose American civilisation with the aristocratic and individualistic values of traditional France would have meant acknowledging themselves to be conservatives, which was intolerable. And so they clothed their deeply conservative rejection of modern mass-civilisation in the form of an ideological decision to take sides against "American Capitalism" in the cold war—only, indeed, to stumble then against

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the insight that "our values have no place in Communism." Nothing would do them more good than to decide just once to apply the Marxist analysis of "the ideological superstructure" to their own ideological constructions—for the revolutionary pose of the mandarins is the very prototype of what the Marxist would call "false consciousness."

But the Jacobin message is not the only message France has, and its old civilisation is by no means on its deathbed. Rather, it is passing through a crisis of adjustment to a radically altered world, in which it has all the more difficulty in finding its bearings because it spent the decisive years of the transition under the narcosis of Vichy—and the years afterwards under the self-intoxicating myth of victory. It is by no means inconceivable that a conservative idea of culture, a reasoned defence of aristocratic values against the technical frenzy of the modern world, will find an echo in those very countries where technical and organisational development has reached its highest point; and the rejection of a certain materialist vulgarity, which is all too easily caricatured as "Americanism," does constitute a kind of natural common denominator of all French intellectuals, from Sartre to André Siegfried, without necessarily implying anti-Americanism, neutralism, or pro-Communism. Those who most easily found their bearings in this situation were the writers of the Catholic tradition, who had never believed in technical progress and the blessings of a materialist civilisation. It is just this opposition to the "modern world"—as the late, almost posthumous fame of Claudel bears witness—that has won for them in this post-war period a prominence in French intellectual life which they have not had for a hundred years. The radical rejection of modern mass-civilisation was Bernanos's last message, as it was the utopia of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's posthumous *Citadelle*. Here lay the original inspiration for Mounier's philosophy of Personalism, and it is to this group, at bottom, that Albert Camus has, after many detours, attached himself with his appeal to the archaic "Mediterranean spirit"—his personal "revolt" is the exact negation of the ideology of Revolution. And far beyond this group, the "salvation of man," i.e. preventing the sovereign individual from being transformed into a mere cog of organised society, has become the very *leit-motif* of French literature, attaining its greatest expressiveness in André Malraux's post-war work on the philosophy of art.

Today, with the end of the "mandarinate," both the peak of the crisis and the period of pure negation seem to be past. That France should once more take, and earn, her place in the world, instead of drawing back resentfully into her memories of "*la belle époque*" —this, beyond all its ideological confusions and political ambiguities, was the core of the "Mendès-France myth" and of that still formless "New Left," under the banner of which Malraux, Mauriac, and Camus have found themselves united. There is no irreconcilable contradiction between the will to defend and reinvigorate one's own traditional cultural values and the equally determined will to free France from the suffocating burden of its "stagnation by consent." There is no contradiction between the great experiment of Jean Vilar's "Théâtre National Populaire," which has presented Corneille's aristocratic, stilted, and heroic tragedies before enthusiastic audiences in the working-class suburbs of Paris, and the endeavour to give the same workers better tools, more rational methods of production, and a higher standard of living. If a synthesis on these lines is achieved, France will not have to fear for her prestige in the world.

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Leslie A. Fiedler

The Middle Against Both Ends

I A M surely one of the few people pretending to intellectual respectability who can boast that he has read more comic books than attacks on comic books. I do not mean that I have consulted or studied the comics—I have read them, often with some pleasure. Nephews and nieces, my own children, and the children of neighbours have brought them to me to share their enjoyment. An old lady on a ferry boat in Puget Sound once dropped two in my lap in wordless sympathy: I was wearing, at the time, a sailor's uniform.

I have somewhat more difficulty in getting through the books that attack them. I am put off, to begin with, by inaccuracies of fact. When Mr. Geoffrey Wagner in his *Parade of Pleasure* calls Superboy "Superman's brother" (he is, of course, Superman himself as a child), I am made suspicious. Actually, Mr. Wagner's book is one of the least painful on the subject; confused, to be sure, but quite lively and not in the least smug; though it propounds the preposterous theory that the whole of "popular literature" is a conspiracy on the part of the "plutos" to corrupt an innocent American people. Such easy melodrama can only satisfy someone prepared to believe, as Mr. Wagner apparently does, that the young girls of Harlem are being led astray by the *double-entendres* of blues records!

Mr. Wagner's notions are at least more varied and subtle than Mr. Gershom Legman's, who cries out in his *Love and Death* that it is simply our sexual frustrations which breed a popular literature dedicated to violence. But Mr. Legman's theory explains too much: not only comic books but Hemingway, war, Luce, Faulkner, the status of women—and, I should suppose, Mr. Legman's own shrill hyperboles. At that, Mr. Legman seems more to the point in his search for some deeply underlying cause than Frederic Wertham, in *Seduction of the Innocent*, with his contention that the pulps and comics in themselves are schools for murder. That the undefined aggressiveness of disturbed children can be given a shape by comic books, I do not doubt; and one could make a good case for the contention that such literature standardises crime woefully or inhibits imagination in violence, but I find it hard to consider so obvious a symptom a prime cause of anything. Perhaps I am a little sensitive on this score, having heard the charge this week that the recent suicide of one of our college freshmen was caused by his having read (in a course of which I am in charge) Goethe, Dostoevsky, and *Death of a Salesman*. Damn it, he *had* read them, and he *did* kill himself!

In none of the books on comics I have looked into, and in none of the reports of ladies' clubs, protests of legislators, or statements of moral indignation by pastors, have I come on any real attempt to understand comic books: to define the form, midway between icon and story; to distinguish the sub-types: animal, adolescent, crime, western,

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etc.; or even to separate out, from the dead-pan varieties, tongue-in-cheek sports like *Pogo*, frank satire like *Mad*, or semi-surrealist variations like *Plastic Man*. It would not take someone with the talents of an Aristotle, but merely with his method, to ask the rewarding questions about this kind of literature that he asked once about an equally popular and bloody genre: what are its causes and its natural form?

A cursory examination would show that the super-hero comic (*Superman*, *Captain Marvel*, *Wonder Woman*, etc.) is the final form; it is statistically the most popular with the most avid readers, as well as providing the only new legendary material invented along with the form rather than adapted to it.

Next, one would have to abstract the most general pattern of the myth of the super-hero and deduce its significance: the urban setting, the threatened universal catastrophe, the hero who never uses arms, who returns to weakness and obscurity, who must keep his identity secret, who is impotent, etc. Not until then could one ask with any hope of an answer: what end do the comics serve? Why have they gained an immense body of readers precisely in the past fifteen or twenty years? Why must they be disguised as children's literature though read by men and women of all ages? And having answered these, one could pose the most dangerous question of all: why the constant, virulent attacks on the comics, and, indeed, on the whole of popular culture of which they are especially flagrant examples?

STRATEGICALLY, if not logically, the last question should be asked first. Why the attacks? Such assaults by scientists and laymen are as characteristic of our age as puritanic diatribes against the stage of the Elizabethan Era, and pious protests against novel reading in the later 18th century. I suspect that a study of such conventional reactions reveals at least as much about the nature of a period as an examination of the forms to which they respond. The most fascinating and suspicious aspect of the opposition to popular narrative is its unanimity; everyone from the members of the Montana State Legislature to the ladies of the Parent Teachers Association of Boston, Massachusetts, from British M.P.'s to the wilder post-Freudians of two continents agree on this, though they may agree on nothing else. What they have in common is, I am afraid, the sense that they are all, according to their lights, righteous. And their protests represent only one more example (though an unlikely one) of the notorious failure of righteousness in matters involving art.

Just what is it with which vulgar literature is charged by various guardians of morality or sanity? With everything: encouraging crime, destroying literacy, expressing sexual frustration, unleashing sadism, spreading anti-democratic ideas, and, of course, corrupting youth. To understand the grounds of such charges, their justification and their bias, we must understand something of the nature of the sub-art with which we are dealing.

Perhaps it is most illuminating to begin by saying that it is a peculiarly American phenomenon, an unexpected by-product of an attempt, not only to extend literacy universally, but to delegate taste to majority suffrage. I do not mean, of course, that it is found only in the United States, but that wherever it is found, it comes first from us, and is still to be discovered in fully developed form only among us. Our experience along these lines is, in this sense, a preview for the rest of the world of what must follow the inevitable dissolution of the older aristocratic cultures.

One has only to examine certain Continental imitations of picture magazines like *Look* or *Life* or Disney-inspired cartoon books to be aware at once of the debt to American examples and of the failure of the imitations. For a true "popular literature" demands a more than ordinary slickness, the sort of high finish possible only to a machine-produced commodity in an economy of maximum prosperity. Contemporary popular culture, which is a function of an industrialised society, is distinguished from older folk art by its refusal to be shabby or second-rate in appearance, by a refusal to know its

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place. It is a product of the same impulse which has made available the sort of ready-made clothing which aims at destroying the possibility of knowing a lady by her dress.

Yet the articles of popular culture are made, not to be treasured, but to be thrown away; a paper-back book is like a disposable diaper or a paper milk-container. For all its competent finish, it cannot be preserved on dusty shelves like the calf-bound volumes of another day; indeed, its very mode of existence challenges the concept of a library, private or public. The sort of conspicuous waste once reserved for an élite is now available to anyone; and this is inconceivable without an absurdly high standard of living, just as it is unimaginable without a degree of mechanical efficiency that permits industry to replace nature, and invents—among other disposable synthetics—one for literature.

Just as the production of popular narrative demands industrial conditions most favourably developed in the United States, its distribution requires the peculiar conditions of our market places: the mass or democratised market. Sub-books and sub-arts are not distributed primarily through the traditional institutions: museums, libraries, and schools, which remain firmly in the hands of those who deplore mass culture. It is in drugstores and supermarkets and airline terminals that this kind of literature mingles without condescension with chocolate bars and soap-flakes. We have reached the end of a long process, begun, let us say, with Samuel Richardson, in which the work of art has approached closer and closer to the status of a commodity. Even the comic book is a last descendant of *Pamela*, the final consequence of letting the tastes (or more precisely, the buying power) of a class unpledged to maintaining the traditional genres determine literary success or failure.

THOSE who cry out now that the work of a Mickey Spillane or *The Adventures of Superman* travesty the novel, forget that the novel was long accused of travestying literature. What seems to offend us most is not the further downgrading of literary standards so much as the fact that the medium, the very notion and shape of a book, is being parodied by the comics. Jazz or the movies, which are also popular urban arts, depending for their distribution and acceptance on developments in technology (for jazz the gramophone), really upset us much less.

It is the final, though camouflaged, rejection of literacy implicit in these new forms which is the most legitimate source of distress; but all arts so universally consumed have been for illiterates, even stained glass windows and the plays of Shakespeare. What is new in our present situation, and hence especially upsetting, is that this is the first art for *post*-literates, i.e., for those who have refused the benefit for which they were presumed to have sighed in their long exclusion. Besides, modern popular narrative is disconcertingly not oral; it will not surrender the benefits of the printing press as a machine, however indifferent it may be to that press as the perpetuator of techniques devised first for pen or quill. Everything that the press can provide—except matter to be really read—is demanded: picture, typography, even in many cases the illusion of reading along with the relaxed pleasure of illiteracy. Yet the new popular forms remain somehow prose narrative or pictographic substitutes for the novel; even the cognate form of the movies is notoriously more like a novel than a play in its handling of time, space and narrative progression.

From the folk literature of the past, which ever since the triumph of the machine we have been trying sentimentally to recapture, popular literature differs in its rejection of the picturesque. Rooted in prose rather than verse, secular rather than religious in origin, defining itself against the city rather than the world of outdoor nature, a by-product of the factory rather than agriculture, present-day popular literature defeats romantic expectations of peasants in their embroidered blouses chanting or plucking balalaikas for the approval of their betters. The haters of our own popular art love to condescend to the folk; and on records or in fashionable night-clubs in recent years, we have had enter-

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tainers who have earned enviable livings producing commercial imitations of folk songs. But contemporary vulgar culture is brutal and disturbing: the quasi-spontaneous expression of the uprooted and culturally dispossessed inhabitants of anonymous cities, contriving mythologies which reduce to manageable form the threat of science, the horror of unlimited war, the general spread of corruption in a world where the social bases of old loyalties and heroisms have long been destroyed. That such an art is exploited for profit in a commercial society, mass-produced by nameless collaborators, standardised and debased, is of secondary importance. It is the patented nightmare of us all, a packaged way of coming to terms with one's environment sold for a dime to all those who have rejected the unasked-for gift of literacy.

Thought of in this light, the comic books with their legends of the eternally threatened metropolis eternally protected by immaculate and modest heroes (who shrink back after each exploit into the image of the crippled newsboy, the impotent and cowardly reporter) are seen as inheritors, for all their superficial differences, of the *inner* impulses of traditional folk art. Their gross drawing, their poverty of language cannot disguise their heritage of aboriginal violence, their exploitation of the ancient conflict of black magic and white. Beneath their journalistic commentary on A-bomb and Communism, they touch archetypal material: those shared figures of our lower minds more like the patterns of dream than fact. In a world where men threaten to dissolve into their most superficial and mechanical techniques, to become their borrowed newspaper platitudes, they remain close to the impulsive, subliminal life. They are our not quite machine-subdued Grimm, though the Black Forest has become, as it must, the City; the Wizard, the Scientist; and Simple Hans, Captain Marvel. In a society which thinks of itself as "scientific" —and of the Marvelous as childish—such a literature must seem primarily children's literature, though, of course, it is read by people of all ages.

WE ARE now in a position to begin to answer the question: what do the righteous really have against comic books? In some parts of the world, simply the fact that they are American is sufficient, and certain homegrown self-contemners follow this line even in the United States. But it is really a minor argument, lent a certain temporary importance by passing political exigencies. To declare oneself against "the Americanisation of culture" is meaningless unless one is set resolutely against industrialisation and mass education.

More to the point is the attack on mass culture for its betrayal of literacy itself. In a very few cases, this charge is made seriously and with full realisation of its import; but most often it amounts to nothing but an accusation of "bad grammar" or "slang" on the part of some school marm to whom the spread of "different than" seems to threaten the future of civilised discourse. What should set us on guard in this case is that it is not the fully literate, the intellectuals and serious writers, who lead the attack, but the insecure semi-literate. In America, there is something a little absurd about the indignant delegation from the Parent Teachers Association (themselves clutching the latest issue of *Life*) crying out in defence of literature. Asked for suggestions, such critics are likely to propose *The Readers Digest* as required reading in high school—or to urge more comic book versions of the "classics": emasculated Melville, expurgated Hawthorne, or a child's version of something "uplifting" like "The Fall of the House of Ussher." In other countries, corresponding counterparts are not hard to find.

As a matter of fact, this charge is scarcely ever urged with much conviction. It is really the portrayal of crime and horror (and less usually sex) that the enlightened censors deplore. It has been charged against vulgar art that it is sadistic, fetishistic, brutal, full of terror; that it pictures women with exaggeratedly full breasts and rumps, portrays death on the printed page, is often covertly homosexual, etc., etc. About these charges, there are two obvious things to say. First, by

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and large, they are true. Second, they are also true about much of the most serious art of our time, especially that produced in America.

There is no count of sadism and brutality which could not be equally proved against Hemingway or Faulkner or Paul Bowles—or, for that matter, Edgar Allan Poe. There are certain more literate critics who are victims of their own confusion in this regard; and who will condemn a Class B movie for its images of flagellation or bloodshed only to praise in the next breath such an orgy of highminded sadism as *Le Salaire de la Peur*. The politics of the French picture may be preferable, or its photography; but this cannot redeem the scene in which a mud- and oil-soaked truckdriver crawls from a pit of sludge to reveal the protruding white bones of a multiple fracture of the thigh. This is as much horror-pornography as *Scarface* or *Little Caesar*. You cannot condemn *Superman* for the exploitation of violence, and praise the existentialist-homosexual-sadist shockers of Paul Bowles. It is possible to murmur by way of explanation something vague about art or catharsis; but no one is ready to advocate the suppression of anything merely because it is æsthetically bad. In this age of conflicting standards, we would all soon suppress each other.

AN OCCASIONAL Savonarola is, of course, ready to make the total rejection; and secretly or openly, the run-of-the-mill condemner of mass culture does condemn, on precisely the same grounds, most contemporary literature of distinction. Historically, one can make quite a convincing case to prove that our highest and lowest arts come from a common anti-bourgeois source. Edgar Allen Poe, who lived the image of the dandy that has been haunting high art ever since, also, one remembers, invented the popular detective story; and there is a direct line from Hemingway to O'Hara to Dashiell Hammett to Raymond Chandler to Mickey Spillane.

Of both lines of descent from Poe, one can say that they tell a black and distressing truth (we are creatures of dark impulse in a threatened and guilty world), and that they challenge the more genteel versions of "good taste." Behind the opposition to vulgar literature, there is at work the same fear of the archetypal and the unconscious itself that motivated similar attacks on Elizabethan drama and on the 18th century novel. We always judge Gosson a fool in terms of Shakespeare; but this is not the point—he was just as wrong in his attack on the worst written, the most outrageously bloody and bawdy plays of his time. I should hate my argument to be understood as a defence of what is banal and mechanical and dull (there is, of course, a great deal!) in mass culture; it is merely a counter-attack against those who are aiming through that banality and dullness at what moves all literature of worth. Anyone at all sensitive to the life of the imagination would surely prefer his kids to read the coarsest fables of Black and White contending for the City of Man, rather than have them spell out, "Oh, see, Jane. Funny, funny Jane," or read to themselves hygienic accounts of the operation of supermarkets or manureless farms. Yet most schoolboard members are on the side of mental hygiene; and it is they who lead the charge against mass culture.

Anyone old enough to have seen, say, *Rain* is on guard against those who in the guise of wanting to destroy savagery and ignorance wage war on spontaneity and richness. But we are likely to think of such possibilities purely in sexual terms; the new righteous themselves have been touched lightly by Freud and are firm believers in frankness and "sex education." But in the very midst of their self-congratulation at their emancipation, they have become victims of a new and ferocious prudery. One who would be ashamed to lecture his masturbating son on the dangers of insanity, is quite prepared (especially if he has been reading Wertham) to predict the electric chair for the young scoundrel caught with a bootlegged comic. Superman is our Sadie Thompson. We live in an age when the child who is exposed to the "facts of life" is protected from "the facts

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of death." In the United States, for instance, a certain Doctor Spock has produced an enlightened guide to childcare for modern mothers—a paper-back book which sold, I would guess, millions of copies. Tell the child all about sex, the good doctor advises, but on the subject of death—hush!

By more "advanced" consultants, the taboo is advanced further toward absurdity: no bloodsoaked Grimm, no terrifying Andersen, no childhood verses about cradles that fall—for fear breeds insecurity; insecurity, aggression; aggression, war. There is even a "happy," that is to say, expurgated, Mother Goose in which the three blind mice have become "kind mice"—and the farmer's wife no longer hacks off their tails, but "cuts them some cheese with a carving knife." Everywhere the fear of fear is endemic, the fear of the very names of fear; those who have most ardently desired to end warfare and personal cruelty in the world around them, and are therefore most frustrated by their persistence, conspire to stamp out violence on the nursery bookshelf. This much they can do anyhow. If they can't hold up the weather, at least they can break the bloody glass.

THIS same fear of the instinctual and the dark, this denial of death and guilt by the enlightened genteel, motivates their distrust of serious literature, too. Faulkner is snubbed and the comic books are banned, not in the interests of the classics or even of Robert Louis Stevenson, as the attackers claim, but in the name of a literature of the middle ground which finds its fictitious vision of a kindly and congenial world attacked from above and below. I speak now not of the few intellectual converts to the cause of censorship, but of the main body of genteel book-banners, whose idol is Lloyd Douglas or even A. J. Cronin. When a critic like Mr. Wagner is led to applaud what he sees as a "trend" toward making doctors, lawyers, etc. the heroes of certain magazine stories, he has fallen into the trap of regarding middling fiction as a transmission belt from the vulgar to the high. There is no question, however, of a slow climb from the level of literature which celebrates newspaper reporters, newsboys, radio commentators (who are also super-heroes in tight-fitting uniforms with insignia), through one which centres around prosperous professionals, to the heights of serious literature, whose protagonists are suicides full of incestuous longings, lady lushes with clipped hair, bootleggers, gangsters, and broken-down pugs. To try to state the progression is to reveal its absurdity.

The conception of such a "trend" is nothing more than the standard attitude of a standard kind of literature, the literature of slick-paper ladies' magazines, which prefers the stereotype to the archetype, loves poetic justice, sentimentality, and gentility, and is peopled by characters who bathe frequently, live in the suburbs, and are professionals. Such literature circles mindlessly inside the trap of its two themes: unconsummated adultery and the consummated pure romance. There can be little doubt about which kind of persons and which sort of fables best typify our plight, which tell the truth—or better: a truth in the language of those to whom they speak.

In the last phrase, there is a rub. The notion that there is more than one language of art, or rather, that there is something not quite art, which performs art's function for most men in our society, is disquieting enough for anyone, and completely unacceptable to the sentimental egalitarian, who had dreamed of universal literacy leading directly to a universal culture. It is here that we begin to see that there is a politics as well as a pathology involved in the bourgeois hostility to popular culture. I do not refer only to the explicit political ideas embodied in the comics or in the literature of the cultural élite; but certainly each of these arts has a characteristic attitude: populist-authoritarian on the one hand, and aristocratic-authoritarian on the other.

It is notorious how few of the eminent novelists or poets of our time have shared the political ideals we (most readers of this magazine and I) would agree are the most noble available to us. The flirtations of Yeats and

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Lawrence with fascism, Pound's weird amalgam of confucianism, Jeffersonianism, and social credit, the modified Dixiecrat principles of Faulkner—all make the point with terrible reiteration. Between the best art and poetry of our age and the critical liberal reader there can be no bond of shared belief; at best we have the ironic confrontation of the sceptical mind and the believing imagination. It is this division which has, I suppose, led us to define more and more narrowly the "æsthetic experience," to attempt to isolate a quality of seeing and saying that has a moral value quite independent of *what* is seen or heard.

> *Time that with this strange excuse*
> *Pardoned Kipling and his views,*
> *And will pardon Paul Claudel,*
> *Pardons him for writing well.*

But the genteel middling mind which turns to art for entertainment and uplift, finds this point of view reprehensible; and cries out in rage against those who give Ezra Pound a prize and who claim that "to permit other considerations than that of poetic achievement to sway the decision would . . . deny the validity of that objective perception of value on which any civilised society must rest." We live in the midst of a strange two-front class war: the readers of the slicks battling the subscribers to the "little reviews" and the consumers of pulps; the sentimental-egalitarian conscience against the ironical-aristocratic sensibility on the one hand and the brutal-populist mentality on the other. The joke, of course, is that it is the "democratic" centre which calls here and now for suppression of its rivals; while the élite advocate a condescending tolerance, and the vulgar ask only to be let alone.

IT IS disconcerting to find cultural repression flourishing at the point where middling culture meets a kindly, if not vigorously thought-out, liberalism. The sort of right-thinking citizen who subsidises trips to America for Japanese girls scarred by the Hiroshima bombing, and deplores McCarthy in the public press, also deplores, and would censor, the comics. In one sense, this is fair enough; for beneath the veneer of slogans that "crime doesn't pay" and the superficial praise of law and order, the comics do reflect that dark populist faith which Senator McCarthy has exploited. There is a kind of "black socialism" of the American masses which underlies formal allegiances to one party or another: the sense that there is always a conspiracy at the centres of political and financial power; the notion that the official defenders of the commonwealth are "bought" more often than not; an impatience with moral scruples and a distrust of intelligence, especially in the expert and scientist; a willingness to identify the enemy, the dark projection of everything most feared in the self, on to some journalistically-defined political opponent of the moment.

This is not quite the "fascism" it is sometimes called. There is, for instance, no European anti-Semitism involved, despite the conventional hooked nose of the scientist-villain. (The inventors and chief producers of comic books have been, as it happens, Jews.) There is also no adulation of a dictator-figure on the model of Hitler or Stalin; though one of the archetypes of the Deliverer in the comics is called Superman, he is quite unlike the Nietzschean figure—it is the image of Cincinnatus which persists in him, an archetype that has possessed the American imagination since the time of Washington: the leader who enlists for the duration and retires unrewarded to obscurity.

It would be absurd to ask the consumer of such art to admire in the place of images that project his own impotence and longing for civil peace some hero of middling culture—say, the good boy of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, who, because he has studied hard in school, has become a lawyer who argues cases before the Supreme Court and has friends who own their own tennis courts. As absurd as to ask the general populace to worship Stephen Dedalus or Captain Ahab! But the high-minded petty-bourgeois cannot understand or forgive the rejection of his own dream, which he considers as nothing less than the final dream of humanity. The very existence of a kind of art based on alle-

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giances and values other than his challenges an article of his political faith; and when such an art is "popular," that is, more read, more liked, more bought than his own, he feels his *raison d'être*, his basic life-defence, imperilled. The failure of the petty-bourgeoisie to achieve cultural hegemony threatens their dream of a truly classless society; for they believe, with some justification, that such a society can afford only a single culture. And they see, in the persistence of a high art and a low art on either side of their average own, symptoms of the re-emergence of classes in a quarter where no one had troubled to stand guard.

THE problem posed by popular culture is finally, then, a problem of class distinction in a democratic society. What is at stake is the refusal of cultural equality by a large part of the population. It is misleading to think of popular culture as the product of a conspiracy of profiteers against the rest of us. This venerable notion of an eternally oppressed and deprived but innocent people is precisely what the rise of mass culture challenges. Much of what upper-class egalitarians dreamed for him, the ordinary man does not want—especially literacy. The situation is bewildering and complex, for the people have not rejected completely the notion of cultural equality; rather, they desire its symbol but not its fact. At the very moment when half of the population of the United States reads no *hard-covered* book in a year, more than half of all high-school graduates are entering universities and colleges; in twenty-five years almost all Americans will at least begin a higher education. It is clear that what is demanded is a B.A. for everyone, with the stipulation that no one be forced to read to get it. And this the colleges, with "objective tests" and "visual aids," are doing their reluctant best to satisfy.

One of the more exasperating aspects of the cultural defeat of the egalitarians is that it followed a seeming victory. For a while (in the Anglo-Saxon world at least) it appeared as if the spread of literacy, the rise of the bourgeoisie, and the emergence of the novel as a reigning form would succeed in destroying both traditional folk art and an aristocratic literature still pledged to epic, ode, and verse tragedy. But the novel itself (in the hands of Lawrence, Proust, Kafka, etc.) soon passed beyond the comprehension of those for whom it was originally contrived; and the retrograde derivations from it—various steps in a retreat toward wordless narrative: digests, pulp fiction, movies, picture magazines—revealed that middling literature was not in fact the legitimate heir of either folk art or high art, much less the successor of both, but a *tertium quid* of uncertain status and value.

The middlebrow reacts with equal fury to an art that baffles his understanding and to one which refuses to aspire to his level. The first reminds him that he has not yet, after all, *arrived* (and, indeed, may never make it); the second suggests to him a condition to which he might easily relapse, one perhaps that might have made him happier with less effort (and here exacerbated puritanism is joined to baffled egalitarianism)—even suggests what his state may appear like to those a notch above. Since he cannot on his own terms explain to himself why anyone should choose any level but the highest (that is, his own), the failure of the vulgar seems to him the product of mere ignorance and laziness—a crime! And the rejection by the advanced artist of his canons strikes him as a finicking excess, a pointless and unforgivable snobbism. Both, that is, suggests the intolerable notion of a hierarchy of taste, a hierarchy of values, the possibility of cultural classes in a democratic state; and before this, puzzled and enraged, he can only call a cop. The fear of the vulgar is the obverse of the fear of excellence, and both are aspects of the fear of difference: symptoms of a drive for conformity on the level of the timid, sentimental, mindless-bodiless genteel.

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Richard Wright

Indonesian Notebook

WHEN I entered the café, I saw D., a young Dutch girl whom I'd known for some time.

"Oh D.!" I called to her. She held out her hand.

"How are you?" she asked.

"I'm happy," I said.

"Good! What's happened?"

"I'm going to one of your ex-colonies, Indonesia."

Her brown eyes widened in surprise. She reached forward and impulsively seized the fingers of my hands.

"You're going to Indonesia?" she asked breathlessly.

"Yes."

"Oh, God! Then maybe you can bring me some spices?"

I hid my shock, remembering that spices were what Christopher Columbus had been looking for in 1492.

~

FEELING the need to learn more about the country I was to visit, I went to see A. In his twenties, he is a full-blooded Indonesian. Single, restless, a student of political science, he is subsidised by his Government, and he openly says: "I belong to the backward nations of the world, the underdeveloped nations." His manner of saying it shows how deeply the sense of the inferiority of his people weighs upon him. He has a quick smile that hides bitter knowledge; already he is an actor: for the outside world that is white, he laughs; for the non-white world he drops his smiling mask, and his eyes stare with the unblinking fixity of the fanatic.

His contacts with the West have left scars.

"I remember once at military school something happened. We were together there, Dutch and Indonesians. I was invited to a birthday party by one of my Dutch classmates. But the parents of my classmate did not want me to come to the house. There was a big row in my classmate's home about it. At the last moment the boy's parents said I could come along. I went and pretended that I was having a good time, but I was self-conscious.

"My father is a doctor and holds a high position. But the Dutch who live next door would never call on his services unless they could not get a white doctor.

"My political awakening came one day at school when I coloured the face of Queen Wilhelmina with my pencil. I didn't know what I was doing; I was sitting in class and when I saw her face on the page of my book, I made it dark, dark like mine. When the Dutch teacher saw that, he beat me, but he didn't tell me why. It seemed natural to me for my Queen to have a dark face. My father had to explain to me the meaning of what I had done."

~

I HAVE since spoken to many other Asians, in an effort to get my bearings before I left. And I have been heavily reminded, once again, that to those who have been penalised because of racial origins, the sense of race

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becomes inflated, swollen, fills almost the whole content of consciousness.

The trampling by a powerful West of the traditional and customary Asian cultures, cultures sacred and beyond rational dispute, left vast populations to the mercy of any strong wind of congenial doctrine. Present Asian mass movements are a frantic attempt on the part of the sundered and atomised "coloureds" to reconstitute their lives, to regain that poise and balance that reigned before the coming of the white man.

Still another, and, to the Western mind, somewhat baffling trait emerged from these conversations. There seems to be in the Asian consciousness a kind of instinct (I can't find a better word!) towards hierarchy, towards social collectives of an organic nature. In contrast to the Western feeling that education is an instrument to enable the individual to become free, to stand alone, the Asian feels that education ought to bind men together. Underlying most Asian reactions is a hunger for strong leadership, for authority, for a sacred "head" towards which all eyes can turn for guidance and final sanction. The Asian seems to have a "picture" of life, and wants to find out where he fits into that "picture." He seeks no separate, unique, or individual destiny. This propensity towards the organically collective may be a residue from his past religious conditioning. In any case, it certainly propels him, irrespective of ideology, towards those collectivistic visions emanating from Peking and Moscow.

White Europe's impact upon the coloured East sets in motion two contradictory currents: one is a reflex gesture on the part of the Easterner to recover what he has lost by his contact with the West, his language, his art, his religion, and his traditional ways of seeing and doing; the other is a state of chronic anxiety, bordering on hysteria, to embrace as quickly as possible the new Western techniques of science and industry in order to defend himself.

Rendered psychologically uncertain as to his own motives, the uprooted Easterner does everything self-consciously, watching himself, as it were. Behaviour is spontaneous only when passionate action lifts him to the plane of self-forgetfulness. Hence, to feel a thing deeply makes that thing the worthwhile thing to do, indeed, makes it the right thing to do.

—

IT HAD been arranged for me to pick up the plane in Madrid. It is Holy Week here. In Asia and Africa the leaders of the newly-freed nations are trying desperately to find ways and means of modernising their countries, to banish fear and superstition, while in Spain millions are marching in pagan splendour behind jewelled images of Dying Gods and Suffering Virgins. Worlds are being born, and worlds are dying.

—

SOMEWHERE between Cairo and Baghdad, I got into conversation with a shy young man who had Oriental features. He turned out to be Indonesian, a student returning home from Holland. He had spent four years studying sociology at Leiden.

"You're going to find your newly-gained knowledge useful." I told him.

"Yes," he said. "My country is very backward."

"Is there a wealthy class among the Indonesians?" I asked.

His glance flickered over my face, and then he perceptibly relaxed. I was to get to know that reaction very well. The Asian had many truths to tell. He had one truth for the British, one for the Dutch, one for the white Americans, and still another and special kind of truth for American Negroes who shared a background of racial experience that made them akin to the Asian.

"No. We have no rich class among our people," he said. "We have no bourgeoisie to knock over."

"But in a nation of 80,000,0000 people, somebody has real money. The Dutch are gone. Who has the money now?"

He stared at me with a strange, hard smile on his lips.

"*For the time being*, the Chinese have all the money," he said grimly.

—

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AT JAKARTA airfield, I quickly became entangled with the bureaucracy of Indonesian customs and immigration. There was a great deal of smiling goodwill but an appalling amount of inefficiency. The young men seemed at a loss as they fumbled with papers, searched about for rubber stamps.

The heat was like a Turkish bath; the humidity was higher than in the African jungle. I was met by Pen Club officials and Mochtar Lubis, editor of the *Indonesia Raya*, an independent Socialist daily. Lubis took me in tow, loaded my luggage into his car, and we nosed into the wide streets of a chaotic, Oriental city. Jakarta, like Accra in Africa, presents to Western eyes a commercial aspect, naked and immediate, that seems to swallow up the entire population in petty trade—men, women, and children. Everyone is doing business, for one must sell to earn money to buy products shipped from Europe.

I passed those famous canals which the Dutch, for some inexplicable reason, had insisted upon digging here in this hot mudhole of a city. I saw a young man squatting upon the bank of the canal, defecating in broad daylight into the canal's muddy, swirling waters; I saw another, then another. Children used the canal for their water closet; then I saw young women washing clothes only a few yards from them. A young girl was bathing; she had a cloth around her middle, and she was dipping water out of the canal, and, holding the cloth out from her body, she poured the water over her covered breasts. A tiny boy was washing his teeth, dipping his toothbrush into the canal. . . .

Lubis's car nosed forward through throngs of strange contraptions that resembled huge tricycles; they had one big wheel at the back, upon which was perched a native boy who sweated and pumped the pedals; in front were two smaller wheels and a seat large enough for two people.

"What is that thing?" I asked Lubis.

"That's our taxicab," he explained. "There are about 40,000 of them in the city. They are called *betjas*."

"A sort of Indonesian rickshaw, eh?"

"Yes, and we are ashamed of them," he confessed. "A boy who works on those things gets ill after about two years. But we have no money to import taxis."

As we drove on, he gave me a short summary of the Indonesian situation. "The government is weak," he explained. "Bandits are everywhere. There are daily clashes between government troops and bandits."

"The literacy rate?"

"About 30 per cent."

"Is education compulsory?"

"The government wants to pass a law making education compulsory," he explained. "But what would such a law mean? We don't have enough school buildings, enough teachers, enough school books. . . ."

"How is the housing situation?"

"Desperate," Lubis said. "Before the war, this city had about four hundred thousand people. We now have three million jammed into it. People flock here for jobs, because they are bored in their villages."

"What's holding up the building of houses? I see that many houses here are made of bamboo. Why can't more people build houses like that?"

"It takes about $50 worth of Western materials to build a house. And we have no dollars, no hard currency. We don't even make nails here."

"What about health?"

"Malaria and yaws and infant mortality are high. We have about 1,400 doctors for 80,000,000 people."

"And education?"

"It's out of control. There is a vast thirst for learning. Universities are springing up everywhere, faster than they can be properly manned. The year the war broke out, we had 240 high-school graduates. There were only ten Indonesians teaching in our high schools. The Dutch left us in the lurch and we had to start from scratch."

~

I WAS lodged in the home of an Indonesian engineer. Mr. P. and his young wife were ardent nationalists, their home modern to the *n*th degree.

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"What kind of an engineer are you, Mr. P.? I asked my host.

"I'm an oil man."

"You got your training and experience in Europe?"

"My training I got in Europe," he told me. "But I'm getting my experience now here in my country. You see, before the revolution, they would not hire me to do what I'm now doing."

"You mean the Dutch?"

"Yes. Now I'm the head of my department. It took a revolution to do that. Killing, fighting. . . . I'm a major in the Indonesian Army. By nature, I hate war. But what is one to do? The Dutch attitude was that I was not and could never be intelligent enough to do what I'm doing now."

"Your home is in a beautiful section of the city," I told him.

"This used to be the European quarter," he told me. "The revolution gave me the right to live here."

"How many engineers have you in Indonesia?" I asked him.

"About 160, 40 of whom are in government service. The rest work for themselves, for they make about three times more than the government pays."

After dinner Mr. and Mrs. P. took me for a tour of the city in their car. I noticed that the sidewalks were thronged with children who carried books under their arms. It was past ten o'clock.

"Where are those children going this time of night?" I asked.

"To school," Mrs. P. told me. "We don't have enough school buildings, not enough teachers. So these children are going to the night shift."

The suburbs of Jakarta are studded with lovely newly-built bungalows erected by the *nouveaux riches* from money gained in black-market operations. There is no doubt that a new Indonesian wealthy class is rising and it is focussing attention, most unfavourable, on itself."

~

I HIRED a *betja*, and, perched upon a rickety seat, spent an afternoon looking the city over. I noticed that each home in the wealthy section kept huge, vicious dogs on leash: one move on the part of a stranger created a loud snarling and barking. These dogs, I was told, defended the inhabitants against the all-too-frequent visits of bandits who infested nearby mountains and suburbs. Try as I could, I have not been able to decipher the mystery of the Indonesian bandit. One person would tell me that the bandits were just lawless gangs; another would swear that they were Communists; yet another would claim that they were Moslems who objected to Communist participation in the present Government; still others said that they were youths who had fought in the revolution and had never learned how to work, and they were now living in the only manner known to them. I suspected that the bandits are all of this, plus hordes of young men who are, in the daytime, respectable wage-earners and who find it impossible to make ends meet in a nation where the Government printing presses were grinding out a whirlwind of all but worthless paper money. In any case, large areas of Java and Sumatra are overrun with bandits and smugglers, and it is not safe to drive upon the highways after dark.

~

THIS EVENING I enquired of my host, Mr. P., what there was that one could do or see in Jakarta at night, and he informed me that there were no nightclubs, no bars in the city.

"We are Moslems, and we are not a drinking people. We dance, but not in nightclubs. There are but few Europeans in the city now. They are going home, or being sent home, at the rate of 20,000 a year. There will be but 50,000 Dutch left at the end of this year. Nightclubs are definitely European establishments; so, when the Europeans go, so do the nightclubs."

~

THIS MORNING I went into the Ministry of Information for a press card, so that I could attend the Bandung Conference, which was to take place in a few days. All the faces

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behind the desks were dark, as dark as mine. At one desk, I saw a white American newspaperman leaning forward intently and putting up an argument, and the Indonesian official to whom he was so urgently talking was obviously not listening, and had already made up his mind as to the kind of negative answer that he was going to serve up. But the moment he saw me, his manner changed at once. While the white American waited, I got my press card at once. I was a member of the master race. And I thought of all the times in the American South when I had had to wait until the whites had been served before I could be served. . . .

—

As HUMID Indonesian days unfold, I make many tiny discoveries. Instead of toilet paper, the Indonesians use water; a small bucket of water is placed in each toilet. Toilet paper is hard to come by, having to be imported from Europe. Families not well-off enough to afford buckets will place several beer bottles of water beside the commode.

Indonesian bathrooms are strange contraptions indeed. There is no bathtub as such. In middle-class Indonesian bathrooms, there is a shower which works when there is enough water, which is rather rare. Mostly you will find a walled-off enclosure about four feet high, in which water is trapped as it drips from a faucet. To make the water flow, a reserve is kept constantly on hand. In order to bathe, you take a tin pan and wash towel, soap yourself thoroughly, and, afterwards, dip out of the walled enclosure enough water to dash over your head and body to rinse off the soapsuds.

The classic bathroom joke in Jakarta concerns an American businessman who got by mistake into one of those walled-off water traps, and actually took his bath, an act which necessitated the foregoing of all bathing for the Indonesian family in whose house he was an honoured guest. The hygienic-minded American had polluted the supply of water for the entire day for the entire family.

—

THE drive up the mountain slopes to Bandung lasted more than four hours, and at no time were we out of sight of these brown Javanese faces. The island of Java has a population density not to be matched anywhere else on earth; more than 1,000 people to the square mile. In many respects the Javanese countryside reminded me of Africa: there were those stolid peasants squatting on the side of the roads, and staring off into space; there were those same bare-breasted young women with sombre coloured clothes—sarongs—rolled and tucked about their waists; there were those barefooted men carrying burdens on poles slung over their shoulders (instead of on their heads, as in Africa, making mincing little steps, almost like dancing a jig, so that the jogging of the elastic pole up and down would coincide with their footsteps; there was that same murderous sun that heated metal so hot that it would burn the skin; there was that same bright greenness of vegetation. And there was that bustling economic activity filling the visible landscape, that frantic buying and selling of matches and soap and tinned sardines, that fateful hallmark of those who have enjoyed the dubious blessing of having their old, traditional, and customary culture blasted and replaced by the market. There was that same red earth, that same attitude of the sleepwalker in the young men who strode along, that same gliding slow-motion gesturing in the women and children, that fine gracefulness of stance that seems to be the physical trait of people who live in the tropics; only here in Java there was no jungle, no dense wall of dark green vegetation rising fifty or sixty feet into the moist and hot air.

My friend Lubis was behind the wheel of the car, and the temperature dropped as we climbed into the mountains where volcanic craters could be seen crowned by haloes of white, fluffy clouds.

We rolled into Bandung, a city of half a million people, and saw a forest of banners proclaiming the solidarity of the Asian and African peoples, and welcoming delegations to the city. White-helmeted troops lined the

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clean streets, holding Sten guns in their hands, and from their white belts hand grenades dangled. The faces of these troops were like blank masks, and they looked at you with black, cold, and unresponsive eyes.

Our car was stopped, and we had to show our credentials, then we were waved on. I saw that the entrance of every hotel was under heavy guard.

"They are taking no chances," I commented.

"A few days ago," Lubis told me, "they rounded up every loose woman in the city, and hustled them out. The city is ringed by crack troops. They don't want any unexpected visits from bandits. No deliveries of packages will be accepted at any hotel in which delegates or newspapermen are staying——"

"Why?"

"Such packages might contain bombs, my friend."

We drove past the conference building and saw the flags of the twenty-nine participating nations of Asia and Africa billowing lazily in a weak wind; already the streets were lined with crowds, and their black, yellow, and brown faces looked eagerly at each passing car, their sleek black hair gleaming in the bright sun, their slanted eyes peering intently to catch sight of some prime minister, a U Nu, or a Chou En-lai, or a Nehru. . . . Then the air was pierced by a screaming siren, heralding the approach of some august representative of some Asian or African country. Day in and day out these crowds would stand in this tropic sun, staring, listening, applauding. They were getting a new sense of themselves, getting used to new roles and new identities.

Lubis and I got out at my hotel, and swarms of children rushed forward with notebooks, calling out:

"Please sign! Autograph, please . . . !"

I didn't relish standing in that homicidal sun, and I said quickly:

"No, I no write." I pointed to Lubis. "He important man. Make him sign. Me, I no write."

I dashed for the shade of the hotel corridor, and the children surrounded Lubis, held him captive for half an hour; he sweated and signed his name, cursing me.

~

At last, Sukarno, President of the Republic of Indonesia, mounted the rostrum to deliver the opening address. He was a small man, tan of face, and with a part of dark, deep-set eyes; he moved slowly, deliberately. He spoke in English with a slight accent. Before he had uttered more than a hundred syllables, he declared: "This is the first international conference of coloured people in the history of mankind!" Throughout his speech, Sukarno was appealing to race and religion ("our countries were the birthplaces of religions"): they were the only realities in the lives of the men before him that he could appeal to. Rather, he was evoking these twin demons; he was trying to organise them. The reality of race and religion was there, swollen, tender, turbulent.

The speeches went on and on. It was clear that they had not been prearranged, and that no one knew what the others had planned to say. Hence, a certain amount of repetitiousness drove home the racial theme with crushing force. These were not political speeches in the Western sense of the term. They were evangelical harangues, with integral parts of compassion and bitterness. It was rumoured that Nehru had objected to this battery of speeches, and I can well believe it, but I doubt if even Nehru knew in advance what the overall impression of that outpouring of emotion would be.

~

Racial feeling manifested itself at Bandung in a thousand subtle forms. As I watched the delegates work at the conference, I saw a strange thing happen. Before Bandung, most of these men had been strangers, and on the first day they were wary towards each other, bristling with charge and countercharge against America and Russia. But, as the days passed, they slowly cooled off, and another and different mood set in. What was happening? As they came to know one another better, their fear and distrust

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evaporated. Face to face, their ideological defences slowly dropped. Negative unity, bred by a feeling that they had to stand together against a rapacious West, turned into something that hinted of the positive. They began to sense their combined strength; they began to taste blood. They could now feel that their white enemy was far, far away. Day after day dun-coloured Trotskyites consorted with dark Moslems, yellow Indo-Chinese hobnobbed with brown Indonesians, black Africans mingled with swarthy Arabs, tan Burmese associated with dark brown Hindus, and socialists talked to Buddhists. But they all had the same background of colonial subjection, of colour consciousness, and they found that ideology was not needed to define their relations. I got the impression that ideologies were the instruments that these men had grown used to wielding in their struggles with Western white men, and that now, being together and among themselves, they no longer felt the need for them.

~

By SHEER chance I stumbled upon a little book that gave me an insight into just what the nature of Dutch and Indonesian relations were. This booklet was designed to teach the Indonesian language to Dutch officials, housewives, or just wandering Europeans. The first thing that one notices is that there are no Indonesian words in this booklet for polite talk, for civil intercourse; there is not a single sentence that would enable one to inquire of the feelings of another. Whether the author knew it or not, he was writing a book to instruct an army of invaders how to demean, intimidate, and break the spirit of an enemy people in a conquered, occupied country. All sentences are rendered in terms of flat orders, commands; an exclamation point usually follows each sentence, implying that one actually shouted one's wishes. For example, page 22, lesson 7, gave the following use of the Indonesian language. I cite the English equivalents of the Indonesian words which are printed in the lefthand column of each page:

Gardener, sweep the garden!
That broom is broken!
Make a new broom!
Sweep up in front first!
Washerwoman, here are the dirty clothes!
Don't ruin them, will you?
Babu, wash the clothes!

Then, on page 34, one gets in lesson 13, entitled HOLD THE THIEF!, a good look into the psychology of the Dutch, as it related to the humanity of the Indonesian. I quote a part of it, thus:

Didn't you close the window last night?
All the silver is gone.
The drawers of the sideboard are empty.
During the night there has been a thief.
What did the thief steal?
Where is the gardener?
He went to the pawnshop.
He took two spoons and received five guilders.
All the other goods were still in his pack.
He was arrested by the police.
All my stolen property has been returned.

The masterpiece is in lesson 24, page 56, and entitled: THE MASTER IS CROSS. Here it is, word for word:

Who is it?
Where do you come from?
Where are you going?
Why are you running about here?
What are you looking for?
Don't pass along here!
You must stay over there!
You are not clever enough.
You are stupid.
You'll get into trouble in a minute.
Be careful, don't do it like that!
Think first. Look for ways and means.
Are you ashamed?
I want information.
I don't understand.
I think you are lying.
I don't believe it.
Don't talk nonsense!
Speak straight out!
Don't be difficult!
Don't be afraid, answer!

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Just why are you silent?
Why don't you dare?
I don't want to hear such nonsense. Be quiet!
No, that's enough!
The matter is already clear.

And today there are Dutchmen who complain that the Indonesians are "Dutch crazy."

~

Even among Indonesian intellectuals I found strong racial feelings. In an interview with one of the best-known Indonesian novelists, I asked him point-blank:

"Do you consider yourself as being coloured?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because I feel inferior. I can't help it. It is hard to be in contact with the white Western world and not feel like that. Our people are backward; there is no doubt of it. The white Western world is ahead of us. What we see of the white West is advanced; what we see of Asia is backward. So you can't help feeling inferior. And that is why I feel that I'm coloured."

Yet he holds the most violent attitudes towards the Japanese.

"Those *yellow* monkeys!" He spat as he referred to them.

"But they are coloured too," I reminded him.

"But we Indonesians are *brown*," he told me, proudly.

~

Since all progress and social change are measured in terms of the degree to which Asian and African countries resemble Western countries, each tiny alteration wrought in the traditional and customary habits of the people evokes in them feelings of race-consciousness. Said a young Indonesian bureaucrat to me:

"We Indonesians are just discovering the week-end. We used to hear about people going away for the week-end, but it was an experience we had never had. We saw American movies in which people went away from the city to the seashore or the mountains for week-ends. Now we are doing what we saw those white Americans do in the movies. . . ."

~

Deprived of historical perspective, feeling his "racial" world broken, the new Asian makes a cult of action, of dynamism to fill the void that is his; hence, motives for action are neurotically sought for. Racial insults, slights, and offences, no matter how trivial, are hugged and nursed. If the past is shameful, and the future uncertain, then the present, no matter what its content, must be made dramatically meaningful. Rendered masochistic by a too-long Western dominance, carrying a hated burden of over-sensitive racial feelings, he now rushes forward psychologically to embrace the worst that the West can do to him, and he feels it natural that the West should threaten him with atom or hydrogen bombs. In this manner, he accepts the dreaded bombing as a fact long before it comes, if it ever will. Europeans told me that if an atomic bomb ever fell on Asian soil from Western planes, every white man, woman, and child in sight would be slaughtered within twenty-four hours.

"But why," an internationally important official asked in worried tones, "do these people keep on talking and feeling this racial business when they are now free?"

"They can't forget it that quickly," he was told. "It lasted too long. It has become a way of life."

The Western world set these mighty currents in action. And it is not for the Western world to say when and how these currents, now grown turbulent and stormy, will subside.

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Alberto Moravia

The Witness

THEY say that one day we'll all be masters and there won't be any more servants. They say that this profession of domestic servant is unworthy of a man who is really a man, because one man should not wait on another. They say that one day we'll all do everything by ourselves, without servants, like the savages. I'm not going to argue about it. Man never stays still, everything that's in him feels it has to change, and eventually it will change—for the worse. But then he comforts himself by calling it progress. But *here's* where I get you: out of ten men, at least as far as I can see, maybe two are born masters, while all the others are born servants. And the master who is born a master, he likes to give orders from the diapers up; while the others are not happy until they find a master to order them around. What can you do? Men are different, and with all your progress there will always be masters and servants, only they'll call them by another name; and, everybody knows, names count a great deal to people.

As for me, I was born a servant, I have lived until today as a servant, and maybe I'll die an old gaffer, but still a servant. I like to serve; I like to obey; I like to rely on somebody else's will. To serve: perhaps the word can deceive you. Properly looked at, while I serve the master, he serves me. In fact, I claim that if there wasn't a master, then I couldn't work as a servant. And what would I be then? A grave-digger?

So from one master to another, quitting one time because I didn't like him, the next because he didn't like me, and again for some other reason, I finally landed in a villa on the Via Cassia, where it seemed I had found a good position. In this recently constructed villa there lived a couple recently married: she, a blonde, with a long, handsome face, a set of huge intense blue eyes, so very thin, tall, and finely made that, with her golden hair cut short à la Napoleon, she looked like a young boy; he, a small but hefty dark man, with shoulders that were too wide, a square face, a loud voice, his whole person bursting with authority and self-importance —one of those short men who take revenge for being short by domineering and bullying everybody in sight.

He surely must have come from some peasant family, to judge at least from his mother who turned up at the villa one day and whom I almost mistook for one of those peasant women who travel about with a basket of fresh-laid eggs on their arm. She, however, was from a good family; I think she was the daughter of a judge. Now I've said that it was a good position, but I didn't say that it was ideal. To begin with, we were isolated, twenty kilometres out on Via Cassia, and for a servant who didn't possess a meditative character like mine this would have been a great drawback. Then the villa was large, the ground-floor all living-rooms, the second-floor all bedrooms, and, not counting the gardener, there were only three of us to do the work: the lady's maid, the cook, and I. Finally, and this was the worst of it for me, neither he nor she were real masters, that is to say, born

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masters. He was a clodhopper, the son of clodhoppers, the grandson of clodhoppers. She was of a good family, but without money; she had the desire to be a mistress, but she didn't have the habit and, you know, in these matters habit is everything.

Early in the morning, after breakfast, he would leave, climbing into his specially built auto and racing off down the Via Cassia. Most times he stayed out all day. And I should suppose that at Rome, besides the office for imports and exports, there are also some shady deals afoot. She, too, had her specially built auto which she drove herself, though she rarely used it, either because she didn't like the city, or, more probably, because she didn't know anybody there. And so she stayed at home, wandering, dressed in slacks and sports shirt, from room to room, from floor to floor, and even, if the weather was good, out in the garden. She was always doing something, it's true, for in so big a house there was always something to be done. Or, particularly in the afternoons, she would curl up in an armchair, her feet folded under her, and read. But whatever she did, whether it was wandering about the house or reading, you could see that she was dissatisfied and bored. Sometimes, in the garden, she would stand behind me while I helped the gardener plant flowers or trim the trees; sometimes she would jump on the fine horse she kept in a stable at the end of the garden and go for a gallop through the countryside; yet always, in the garden or on horseback, she had that bored and discontented look on her face.

Finally, usually late in the evening, he returned home, blowing his horn furiously the moment he turned the corner of Via Cassia. At the sound of that auto's horn, you saw who was the master in that villa. She jumped up from the sofa where she was reading and ran to the door with those long legs of hers clasped in very tight slacks; alongside her ran, barking, two huge red and black Great Danes, large as calves, who all afternoon had slept huddled at her feet. The maid ran, tying on her apron and setting her cap in place. The gardener, who also was the villa's custodian, ran to unlatch the gate for him. And I ran to throw open the front door. His dazzling headlights bearing down on us, he drove up the driveway that wound through the garden, got out, and walked into the house with the stride of a Mussolini. His first words were always the same: "Is it ready?" Then he went and stretched out on one of the numerous sofas in the living-room; and she, like a true love-sick cat, would squeeze up to him and, taking his hand, begin stroking with her finger the long black hairs that grew on his wrist. He let her hold it and meanwhile with his other hand propped up a newspaper and read, indifferent to her. Then I buttoned myself into my waiter's jacket, flung open the dining-room's double doors, and, with a half-bow, announced: "Dinner is served."

HAVE you ever seen, in some very cheap eating-place on the periphery, a poor sweated and begrimed ditch-digger, still wearing on his head a cap made out of a piece of newspaper, shovel into his mouth an enormous plate of pork and beans? Well, there's my master to a T, for all his coming home in a specially built auto and his suits made of imported English tweeds. At one end of a very long yellow marble table, laid with lace and crystal, with silver and the most beautiful porcelain you could ever see, sat she, bolt upright, rigid, full of dignity; at the other end, his napkin stuffed down into his collar, sprawled over the table, sat he, or rather, the ditch-digger. But what am I saying, ditch-digger? It's a slander against the ditch-diggers. Like those babies who still can't walk properly and every two steps fall on all fours, he would try to eat with his knife and fork, but most times he fell back on his hands, especially if we had chicken or boned beefsteak. And let's not talk about chewing with his mouth open, or drinking with his jowls full, or cleaning his face with the back of his hand, or lining up the peas on his knife and shoving them into his mouth: there wasn't a vulgar gesture he didn't display, stringing them along one after the other like so many pearls. Naturally she was pained by all this, for, as she often repeated, she believed in good manners. I saw her watch

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him fixedly with those great blue eyes, and then look at me, and then at the flowers which stood at the centre of the table. Or she would sigh and lower her head. But he didn't notice a thing and kept right on worse than before. At last she would tell me: "Remigio, change the master's plate"; but he, who was gnawing at some bone, would protest with a growl, just like a dog, and then I waited until he finished, the clean plate in my hand.

I worked there about a month and, except for those regrettable dinners, I liked my job. I lived quietly, I had a nice room with a bath, and besides I could dedicate myself to gardening, which is my passion. But one night the storm which, at bottom, I had always forseen, broke loose. As always, he had thrown himself on a plate of meat, using his hands. I remember that they were ribs of lamb, grilled over the fire, very rare. She was watching him and, as usual suffering. He gnawed all the ribs, four of them, one after the other, smearing himself with grease up to his ears; and then, when it looked as though he was finished, he started all over again.

At this point she said, firmly, from the other end of the table: "Valentino, can't you stop eating with your hands? Besides everything else, you wipe your fingers afterwards on the napkins and we'd have to have a service for twenty-four people to keep up with you."

He was crushing a bone with his strong, closely set, white teeth, which looked like a wolf's. He turned ferocious eyes towards her and didn't say a word. She blinked once or twice and insisted: "Valentin. . . ."

For a moment he put down the bone and said, very clearly, "Don't bother me," and then he picked up the bone again.

"One shouldn't eat with one's hands," she started again, excited and very nervous. "Only boors eat with their hands."

"So I'm a boor?"

"Yes, if you continue behaving like this, you are."

"And do you know what you are?"

"I don't know and I don't want to know —but stop eating with your hands."

"You are a bankrupt, a nag, and an idiot."

At these insults she jumped as if a glass of wine had been thrown in her face. She said, with dignity: "I may be a bankrupt, but in my house no one ate with their hands."

"I can believe it; you didn't have anything to eat."

"Valentin. . . ."

"Shut up, idiot."

Then she lost her patience. Leaning over the table, her eyes narrowing with hate, she hissed: "I've never told you everything I think of you. The time has come to tell you. You are a boor, you are an oaf, you are a roughneck. You are only good for making money. And at least you could be good-looking, but no, you are a dwarf. . . ."

It was this word "dwarf" which must have been the insult which went straight to his heart. I stepped back barely in time because if I hadn't he would have run right over me, hurtling from his place at the other end of the table to where his wife was sitting. She still sat there, and watched him come, a pale, twisted smile on her face. Her husband reached her and lifted his hand; she stared straight at him. Then he hit her on the face, once, twice. She got up from the table and, without hurrying, walked out of the room. Her husband followed her, enraged; and then I heard screams and shouts, but it was always he who did the shouting. And then there must have been blows, though I didn't see a thing. Quietly I cleared off the table as I did every night, and then I went to my room. To tell the truth, this scene hadn't made any particular impression on me. First of all, as I have said, I had been expecting it for quite some time; and then, everybody knows, the table is the place where rows occur, and as for rows like this, even more violent ones, I've witnessed more than I can count during my career as a servant.

THE morning after, I got up very early and went to the wardrobe room. The villa was immersed in profound silence, the silence of the country. In the wardrobe I took a pair of his shoes and started shining them, humming under my breath, sitting before an

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open window streaming with sunlight. At that moment, the door opened and she appeared on the threshold.

I looked at her and I saw immediately that the blows had been many and heavy. She had an eye blacked shut, or rather half-shut and encircled by a bruise. One of those dark bruises that first turn green, then yellow, and take a month to disappear. It gave a strange aspect to her face, comic and sad at the same time. I looked at her and that bruise was precisely one of those things which, the more one wishes not to stare at it, the more one stares. Then she said: "Remigio, I'm very sorry but I am forced to discharge you."

I really didn't expect anything like this. I stood with my mouth gaping, the shoe poised in the air. Finally I stammered: "But, signora, what have I done that you must discharge me?"

She answered coldly: "You haven't done anything. On the contrary, I am quite pleased with you."

"But then why?"

"I'm discharging you because of what happened last night."

"And what do I have to do with it?"

"You have nothing to do with it, but you heard and you saw and I cannot tolerate the idea that you should stay on in this house after having heard and seen those things."

"But, signora," I said, at last understanding her, "such things happen. All husbands and wives insult and beat each other. In the upper classes as well as the lower. I swear to you that as far as I am concerned, it's as though I never saw nor heard a thing."

"Perhaps, but I cannot stand being waited on by somebody who has witnessed the things you have. I regret it, but you are discharged."

"But, signora, you are ruining me."

"I will give you an excellent reference," she said. And with these words, she left.

Do you understand? They had insulted and beaten each other, while I, who had nothing at all to do with it, was discharged. I didn't try to argue it, nor did I appeal to the husband who, certainly, would have agreed with me: after all, I liked her and understood her motives and I realised that it would have meant just one more humiliation for her. Without taking into account that afterwards she would have hated me and so I would have had to leave anyway. So I didn't say a word, packed up my belongings in a bundle, and left the same day. But here we come back to what I said before: with a real mistress this never would have happened. A mistress who is really a mistress, she doesn't even see the servant, for he is transparent as glass. And in his presence she can even go around naked or stage a prize-fight with her husband, yet always as though the servant didn't exist. Ah well, this world doesn't have any more *real* mistresses and masters.

(Translated by Raymond Rosenthal)

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Stuart Hampshire

In Defence of Radicalism

IN ENCOUNTER, as elsewhere now, one reads cries of despair, rumblings of gloom, dark hints of the inadequacy of Reason (and reasoners), of the hopelessness of progress. At the best, one expects invocations of Orwell and Tocqueville, at the worst, of Burke and Kierkegaard, and certainly not an unashamed platitude about the possibilities of progress or the needs of enlightenment. I wonder why this has happened. There seems no good ground for despair or gloom, if we are really concerned with freedom in the world in general, and not only with a few particular liberties long familiar in Europe. There are more destructive bombs in the world, but there is not less freedom; it has only become more dangerous and disagreeable to defend it.

Throughout history, very few privileged societies have enjoyed that degree of personal freedom which is today enjoyed by large sections of the population of America, of most of Western Europe outside Spain, of many parts of the English-speaking Commonwealth, and of some other countries comparably prosperous and democratic. And in many parts of the East, and of Africa, there are growing demands for greater freedom of the indivdual, and the means of obtaining it are coming nearer. There must always be a running change in the distribution of power within States and between States; some classes of persons lose some of their liberties, others, formerly oppressed and almost left off the pages of history, gain a freedom of choice that they never had before. Those who believe in freedom must wish to see it indefinitely extended and, as far as possible, equally distributed. They will support any movement of liberation among a suppressed section of humanity, provided that it does not bring with it some greater enslavement of others. These may be called the principles of 1789; I see no reason to repudiate them. They are now often derided as illusions; but perhaps this is because of the discomfort which their application is beginning to cause, particularly to those who in Western Europe have hitherto enjoyed liberties not widely shared elsewhere. I still believe in the "illusions" of the 18th century—Reason, Science, Freedom—so far as one can believe in abstract slogans at all. I do not see where they have failed; I only see the difficulty of calculating at any particular time where the greatest threat to freedom is and how it ought to be resisted.

This article by Stuart Hampshire, like the previous articles by Raymond Aron ("Nations and Ideologies," January 1955) and Michael Polanyi ("On Liberalism and Liberty," March 1955), will be presented at a forthcoming conference on "The Future of Freedom." This conference, sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, will take place in Milan during the week September 12th–17th. More than 110 delegates from some sixteen countries will attend.

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But what is freedom? And why is it always right to defend and extend it, in preference to anything else?

A MAN is free and feels free: (1) If he is not liable to be killed, imprisoned, or otherwise maltreated without redress under an equal and impartial law. This is a necessary qualifying condition without which there can be no freedom at all. (2) If his manner of life, his activities, and enjoyments have been chosen by himself from a wide variety of alternatives open to him. (3) If none of these many alternatives open to him was made ineligible by human threats and sanctions. An alternative manner of life may be said to have been "open" to him if he would not, in fact, have been prevented from living in that way, had he so chosen, by anything other than his own abilities. Clearly freedom, in this sense, admits of degrees correlated with the number of alternative modes of life open. (4) If those who have executive power in the society can be influenced by his preference through some regular voting procedure. No man feels free unless he can to some extent participate in forming the prohibitions to which he submits.

There are good grounds for taking the attainment of human freedom, in this sense, as the end of political action. Whatever else men may seriously desire, need, or attach value to, they will tend to agree, in spite of other differences, in wanting and needing freedom to pursue their own ends, whatever these other ends may be. There is no other equally wide basis of agreement on which mutual respect and consent could be founded. We have no reason to believe that any statements of the form "All men desire so-and-so," or "All men attach value to so-and-so," or "All men believe so-and-so," are true, where some positive end is stated; and we have every reason to believe that almost all statements of this form are either false, or too vague to be used, or too rudimentary. Therefore, either we think it is unnecessary to find an agreed basis for mutual respect in politics, or we will judge the rightness or wrongness of any political action by reference to some principle of freedom. If anyone thinks it unnecessary to find some basis of mutual respect, it may be because he repudiates the application of moral notions to politics altogether; in which case he ought in consistency to repudiate the distinction between right and wrong entirely. He could not maintain that actions are to be divided into political actions and non-political actions; this would be the fallacy of confusing domains of inquiry with divisions in reality. A man must acknowledge responsibility for all his actions, if he acknowledges responsibility for any of them. Alternatively, he may deny the need of a basis of consent on the ground that a policy is right only if it promotes an end known to be good in itself, irrespective of whether this end is agreed to be good by all or most of the persons involved; freedom of choice must be disregarded in the making of policies, if the manner of life likely to be chosen is not that manner of life which is known to be best.

I do not wish to argue against this position simply on the ground that it increases the opportunities for conflict. If I did so argue, I would be implying that, like Hobbes, I take avoidance of conflict to be the end. In fact, I believe that the extension and safeguarding of every individual's equal freedom to choose his own manner of life for himself is the end of political action. Consequently I think that anyone who uses political powers in order to promote some positive end, which he believes to be the best of all ends, acts wrongly, if he at the same time restricts the freedom of choice of the adult persons affected. He is the enemy, however worthy the positive end which he pursues. Any moral standpoint whatever must involve having enemies, unless, following Hobbes, not having enemies is itself made the end of action and the basis of morality. Most of the political thinkers of the past, beginning conspicuously with Plato, were in fact enemies of freedom. One is unlikely to find many unconditional advocates of freedom between 5th and 4th century B.C. Athens and 18th century France: at the best, only benevolent neutrals, like Machiavelli.

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Moral standpoints cannot be demonstrated; they can only be explained and expanded by showing the philosophical reasoning associated with them. If a man thinks that he knows what is good for men, and knows beyond the possibility of error, he may naturally consider himself justified in overriding the freedom of choice of others. If he thinks that he can only learn by accumulated experience what is good and worth pursuing, he will claim no final certainty for himself, and therefore will at least hesitate before overruling the different decisions of others. If he thinks that nothing can be shown to be either good or bad except in its relation to the will and feeling of some individual, he will unhesitatingly admit that he has no right to override the free choices of others in pursuit of any end of his own choosing.

THE first of these three philosophies seems to me definitely mistaken, in the sense that it involves logical confusions about the nature of moral judgements. But I could not *prove* that any such claim to knowledge of positive ends must involve logical confusion; it is a matter of philosophical opinion, and no such opinion could be justified except by a prolonged argument going through most of the traditional problems of philosophy. The Roman Catholic Church, many of the Protestant Churches, the Communist Party, and many puritan and secular moralists would certainly claim to know what is positively good for men, beyond the possibility of error, in at least some domains of human conduct; and they are in consequence ready to disregard the freedom of choice of individuals within these domains. Relying upon revealed truth or some supernatural authority, or upon alleged demonstrations and intuitions, they will hold themselves justified in restricting someone's freedom of choice for a purpose other than the protection of someone else's freedom of choice.

The second philosophy is the tempered liberalism of J. S. Mill; freedom of choice is not in itself the end of political action, but it is indispensable to human welfare and progress, which is the ultimate end. But if the freedom of choice of some men, or of some group, was to be sacrificed in the interests of human welfare generally, could human welfare be the sole criterion by which the sacrifice was to be justified? It seems to me that it could not; but this is a moral opinion, which again I could support by arguments but could not prove.

The third philosophy is unrestricted liberalism. I shall call anyone who accepts it a radical. For a radical the right of each man to choose for himself his own manner of life, as long as he does not disregard the equal right of others to do the same, is the sole criterion in political decision. The fabric of political arrangements and institutions ought to be continuously adjusted with a view to securing the greatest possible freedom of choice to each individual equally and under an equal law. Any prohibition and assertion of power has to be justified, in the last analysis, as the extension of the area of choice open to some men so far too narrowly confined. There has always been in every society some group or class of persons who had a conspicuously narrow range of choice of different ways of life open to them. They are said to be not free, to some degree slaves, in so far as they are not in a position to choose for themselves among alternative ways of life, and in so far as this inability could be remedied by human action without any equally large loss of liberty by others. There are always ruling or privileged groups who have the power to make a wider range of choices open to the suppressed, but usually they will not yield unless they are threatened or forced. The class or group whose freedom of choice is in this way confined will, sooner or later, prepare to assert its rights, if it is sufficiently numerous and if it is not completely enslaved and ignorant. At any time in any society there will always be a more or less complicated set of tensions of this kind which will enter into the temporary politics of that society. Anyone who takes the freedom of the individual as his criterion of political decision must support the relatively suppressed groups which are claiming

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greater liberty for themselves at the expense of those who now have the greater power, as long as the suppressed groups are not aiming at an even greater suppression of the liberty of others. As a matter of principle, he will support any effective resistance to the predominating power of a small group in society, provided that this resistance does not itself take totalitarian forms and override the first and last conditions of freedom given above. At any time he will align himself with that group of interests which can most effectively resist the concentration of power most likely to obstruct or prevent the extending of equal liberty within the society. His enemy will always be changing, as one preponderating group succeeds another; and it is always easy for him to miscalculate the direction from which the greatest threat to the most essential liberties comes. His conception of freedom, the positive content he gives to this formal word in any actual situation, may become out of date as the pattern of society changes and new groups call for new freedoms; while still using the same good words, he may find himself, to his surprise, on the reactionary side in the dialectical process, a process which is, as far as we know, endless and irregular, freedom sometimes retreating, sometimes advancing, and always by the opportunist action of individuals.

A RADICAL will tend always to distrust those who speak of safeguarding our liberties. He will see in this phrase the conservative assumption that the degree and distribution of liberty already existing in a society is to be taken as the permanent standard. This assumption seems to lie behind M. Raymond Aron's recent article in ENCOUNTER, which analyses English politics with scarcely a reference to what has become the most serious issue of government—policy in Africa and colonial policy generally. Because the old tensions, within England, have largely disappeared or changed their form, there is the illusion of stability, and the new tensions may pass unrecognised. Any equilibrium in a society is only a temporary adjustment of groups competing for greater power and freedom; and freedom can only be served by siding with those who have so far been excluded from the full enjoyment of the liberty which the more powerful groups possess. And yet it is natural that those who at any time talk most insistently of the defence of freedom should be those who have the most freedom to lose. This is the very simple reason why radicals are apt to distrust any congresses, or other organisations, for the defence of freedom; for freedom is not something which has to be safeguarded, but rather something which has to be extended. If one tries to stand still, only defending the freedoms already established, one unavoidably finds oneself slipping backwards into repression. An attack on established freedom has to be met, not by digging in for defence, but by going forward to offer new freedom to those who now have little freedom to lose.

This was the significance of the mild and limited social revolution which resistance to the Nazis entailed in England. In the last few years radicalism has lost impetus in England, and in America and in Western Europe generally; governments have wished to stand still, digging in to defend established freedom against Communism, and consequently have fallen into mild repression. The greatest repression for which Englishmen, and other Western Europeans, are now responsible happens at a convenient distance and is not very fully reported: it happens in colonial territories. Any political and social system which can only be maintained by mass arrests without trial, withholding of the right to vote, concentration camps and movements of people away from their homes, is evil for the same reasons that Communism is evil. The bitterness and brutality of the opposition is not an excuse, but rather a condemnation of the social system which brought this bitterness into existence. Throughout Africa the advance of Africans towards greater freedom is generally obstructed; and the government of South Africa does not even pretend to believe in extending the freedom of Africans.

To notice these facts is the most obvious requirement of sincerity, if we are to talk of

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freedom at all. But there are others, equally well worn, which must surely be mentioned again. The Catholic Church is everywhere opposed, in principle and in practice, to the extension of each man's freedom to choose his own way of life for himself, at least in some essential domains. In the countries where the power of the Church is greatest, and conspicuously in Spain, there is always some degree of repression, not only in the legislation affecting heretics and freethinkers, but in less crude ways in policies of censorship, in university appointments and teaching, in schools, in the enforcement of a particular sexual morality, and in the suppression of dangerous knowledge. If Catholic repression is most evident and unconcealed in Spain, it also exists in less crude forms in other Catholic countries. It is impossible to pretend that the Catholic Church, taken as a whole, wishes to defend cultural freedom; it is a temporary ally against Communism, which is certainly a much greater threat to freedom than is the Catholic Church. But it is both pointless, on such an occasion as this, to disguise an alliance of expediency as an agreement of principle. It is better to leave alliances of expediency to the moments when, as politicians, we are required to make the material calculations responsibly. We are here surely required to mark clearly the issues of principle, the lines of division, in fundamental opinions.

LASTLY, there is a certain degree of poverty, a drabness and despair in the conditions of life which still makes the poorer parts of some cities in Europe, and also the poorer villages in the country, seem like prisons in which all ambitions are hopeless. It seems that it would be impossible to break out and to start again; opportunity seems dead unless there is some sign of revolt. There are places where almost everybody does only what he must do in order to live, and where there is no alternative, no moment of free choice. Where such conditions exist, it seems to me that any effective protest or movement of revolt, even including voting for allies of the Communist Party, may be a defence of cultural freedom. The enemies of freedom who, having the power to alter them, allow such conditions of life to exist, are immovable unless they feel themselves threatened by a force that is really formidable; and sometimes and in some places it may be true that only the Communist Party is in fact sufficiently formidable and only temporary support of the Communists will count as an effective protest. And in some countries outside Europe, where the great majority of people have lived at the subsistence level for many generations, one may see two kinds of men, the two kinds seeming almost two species: those who, having wealth, may choose their own form of life and work, who may think for themselves and move to other places and follow their own ambitions and curiosities, and those who are never in a position to refuse the kind of life which circumstances impose upon them and who cannot even reflect upon alternatives. Every serious attempt to break out from this condition seems to me to be right, provided that it is restrained by some respect for the elementary natural rights of those who still stand in the way, and for democratic procedures, where these already exist.

Any revolutionary assertion of the individual's right to some share of the means to think and choose for himself deserves sympathy and support; it deserves support for the same reasons that would make us sympathise with an effective revolt of scientists, peasants, or other groups in the Soviet Union. The Communist Party will certainly crush even the most elementary liberties of its own followers whenever it achieves real power; but those who have no freedom to lose immediately may hope to use this lever of power, the only one they have, and then throw it away later. They may miscalculate, and their last state of frustration may be as bad, or worse, than their present one. But what other calculation can they make if there exists no other power which seriously threatens those who bar the way to improvement? They do less for freedom if they remain crushed and inert. And

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so do we, if we take sides against them, from fear of Communism, without trying to provide some alternative means of breaking out.

Freedom is only safeguarded by supporting every movement which aims at providing some greater diversity of choice for the mass of the people in any country anywhere, and which at the same time respects the right of minorities to vote, and equality before the law. Freedom of choice generally shows itself, whenever it is felt to be growing in any section of society, in public arguments, in new forms of pleasure, in travel and in movement, in experiments in building, in pride in cities, in changes of custom and morality and in the complaints of those who are dispossessed, in the new *emigré* nostalgia. These signs, still evident in America, seem to me to be becoming fewer in Western Europe as we lapse into a Restoration mood, soon to find Bonalds and de Maistres all around us and little Chateaubriands.

Most of the freedoms which we have wished to safeguard in Europe were won by rebels and radicals. Similar freedoms will be, and are being, won by rebels and radicals in Asia and Africa, largely at the expense of Europeans. If we meet to agree that the old radical ideas of enlightenment are naïve, out of date and too simple, and that some new appeal to Burke and the sanctity of tradition is needed, I think that we will have met too late, in time only to show fear. But these are questions of opinion, of moral decision supported by argument. There can be few certainties, either in judgements of practical possibility or in judgements of right and wrong. There is only the necessity of argument and of sympathy.

Jacob at Peniel

Lost in a loveless mirror, one cold eye
Ringed, erect, the bridegroom of mortality,
Hell-bound as Lucifer when he fell,
Winged, among the shadows of his exile.
Locked on hooked limbs that rocked to crush and trip,
And wrung upon the one rung of a thigh,
He clung, sucking inward on a bloody lip.
The traffic of the angels passed him by.—
Heavenward the living desert raced,
Mooned upon the sand and the round sky,
Till, haunting no face but that other face
Wrestling in an arena of stars for the silk city,
Like some wineskin spilled by a beast, he bled.
Then noon unchained his shadow, red as rock,
And he struggled to awake, as if a hawk,
Beating enormous wings, were entering his head.

J. F. Hendry

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Still and All

I give my word on it. There is no way
Other than this. There is no other way
Of speaking. I am my name. I find my place
Empty without a word, and my word is
Given again. It is nothing less than all
Given away again, and all still truly
Returned on a belief. Believe me now.
There is no other. There is no other way.

These words run vertical in their slim green tunnels
Without any turning away. They turn into
The first flower and speak from a silent bell.
But underneath it is as always still
Truly awakening, slowly and slowly turning
About a shadow scribbled down by sunlight
And turning about my name. I am in my
Survival's hands. I am my shadow's theme.

My shadow's ground feeds me with roots, and rhymes
My statement over. Its radius feeds my flames
Into a cool tunnel. And I who find your ways
About me (In every part I find your ways
Of speech) pierce ground and shadow still. The light
Is struck. Its definition makes me my quiet
Survival's answer. All still and all so truly
Wakening underneath me and turning slowly.

It's all so truly still. I'll take you into
The first statement. I'll take you along green tunnels
That channelled light and petalled an iridescent
Symmetry over my bruised shadow. And yes
I'll take you, and your word will follow me,
Till definitions gather distilled honey
And make their mark the fingerprints of light.
I am, believe me then, the name I write.

I lie here still. Yes, truly still. And all
My deliberate identities have fallen
Away with the word given. I find my place
In every place, in every part of speech,
And lie there still. I let my statements go.
A cool green tunnel has stepped in the light of my shadow.
There is no way round it. It leads to the flower
Bell—that swings slowly and slowly over.

Burns Singer

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Colin Clark

The Soviet Crisis

ONE of the most widespread myths about the Soviet Union, particularly attractive to the intellectuals of "under-developed" countries, is the notion that, whatever might be unpleasant about the state of affairs there, at least "they get things done" in the economic field. Even anti-Communist journalists find themselves affected, and it is not uncommon to read, in the British or American press, some melancholy reflection on how difficult things will be in the future when Soviet Russia has "caught up" with or even "surpassed" the West in supplying its citizens with the material goods of life. There is also a body of eminent scholarly opinion which seems to share this view.

By a curious paradox, this type of learned man seems to be relatively more abundant in the United States than in Europe. It would be wrong to leap to the conclusion that this means that Europe is more richly endowed with critical sense. What has happened is, that there are now in the United States a number of large, well-financed, well-known institutions for the carrying out of research into the economic institutions of the Soviet Union, and they are producing, on the whole, second-rate and uncritical material. Americans are so accustomed to defer to the conclusions of "massive research," that they accept these results without further qualification.

In this way some interesting myths and half-truths have become firmly established, not only in the popular, but also in the academic mind. Accepted as unquestioningly as any cliché of text-book history, we now get such statements as: "Soviet production is increasing at the rate of six per cent per annum, far faster than in any other country"; and: "It will only be a matter of time before Russian productivity and living standards overtake American, however advanced the latter may be now."

Now let us say something about the statistical and economic evidence available. Those officials of the Soviet régimes who control the publication of such information are astute and subtle men. (We sometimes tend to forget that the favourite sport of Russia is chess; we do so at our peril.) They know that their publications are being watched by critics (though all too few in number!) and that any deliberately falsified statement is likely to be detected. This does not mean that they will not make a deliberately false statement, if circumstances "require" it; but they will do so as rarely as possible. The rules on which they work are, first, to publish statistical information in the most obscure form—wherever possible as percentages, rather than as actual figures, and with frequent changes of definition and of base date; and, secondly and more important, simply to withhold the publication of a figure whenever it becomes inconvenient. Thirdly, of course, the censors of publications in Russia realise that it would be very inconvenient if they had to censor all the information in technical periodicals, or to

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prevent their crossing the border, so on the whole they have decided to let such information continue to circulate.

It has worked like a charm. The attention of Western economists has been quietly and successfully diverted away from the awkward subjects, upon which information could have been available to them had they but looked for it. They have instead concentrated their attention on such statistical information as the Soviet Government chooses actively to publicise. The more highly qualified of them, who understand the Russian language and have the patience to plough through vast masses of paper, read the technical journals, and gather therefrom a certain harvest of information, nearly all relating to a limited sector of the economy, namely heavy industrial production.

THE real connoisseur of Soviet statistics, however, can frequently draw his most interesting conclusions from the statistics which are *not* published. Thus, the publication of the statistics of the cost of living suddenly ceased in 1929, of births and deaths in 1930. A census was taken in 1937, but the results never published, because it had been discovered at the last moment that the entire staff of the Census Office were a group of "fascists, wreckers, and Trotskyites," who had been guilty of violating every canon of statistical science. The basis on which the harvest statistics were published was suddenly changed in 1933, so as to show, not the harvest which was actually collected, but the harvest which biologists computed had been formed in the ears of the grain and might have been collected if there had been no waste, theft, damage by weather or vermin, etc. For the last two years, no harvest statistics have been made available. And so on.

But this must be a caricature, the reader will be saying. Surely leading Russian experts are not as gullible as all that. Unfortunately, they seem to be. The reader can test it for himself. Let him seek out, not a Communist or a "Party-liner," who can be relied upon to give a blustering and evasive answer, but a "Russian expert," who is supposed to be highly qualified in this field, and ask him the following simple questions:

(1) What is the Russian population, and how rapidly is it increasing?

(2) What is the average Russian consumption per head of the principal foodstuffs, and how does it compare with that of thirty or forty years ago?

(3) What is the amount of housing space occupied by the average Russian family?

Any one who asks such questions of the "expert" will probably be received with a certain amount of irritation that he should be wasting time on such irrelevant matters. He will be told that the expert, doubtless for some good reason, does not happen to have the latest information on these subjects—but has he heard the latest information about the production of sulphuric acid, on which an expert study has just been completed, proving how rapidly the Soviet economy is advancing?

THE next move in this game is to create a catchword. A short digression is called for on the philosophy, or conspiracy, of catchwords. In the modern world, we have to know about so many matters of which we have no direct experience, and concerning which we do not have time to examine all the evidence, that we like to have our conclusions summarised for us in some simple phrase. Schemers, of various degrees of unscrupulousness, take advantage of our needs by distorting catchwords for their own ends. Advertising agents get us to accept slogans about somebody's stomach powder or tooth paste or cosmetics being the best. In this way we do ourselves moderate harm. More serious are the consequences of the catchword distortions of politics or history, prepared for us by more refined intellects. Regarding Soviet economics, the catchword is that the Soviet economy is advancing steadily at the rate of six per cent per annum, that neither in the United States nor in any other Western country is production advancing at so great a rate, and that therefore it is only a matter of time before the production of the Soviet Union exceeds that of the United States, and

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of the whole of the rest of the world for that matter. It is as irrefutable as Malthus's geometrical progression rate of population growth, and about as sensible. In both cases it is an odd and dangerous brand of mathematical pedantry which applies indisputable mathematical methods to highly dubious facts in order to reach a foregone conclusion.

That busy men of affairs, lacking time for further study, should have accepted this version of events, is understandable but regrettable. It is not however so easy to defend the conduct of journalists of good repute, diplomats, and professors, who also appear to have fallen for this story. What, really, do the facts indicate?

AT HARVARD, after some preliminary skirmishes, the definitive statement about the six per cent per annum rate of growth, or, to speak more precisely, the statement which has been interpreted by so many cursory and second-hand readers as a definitive statement of rate of growth, was made by Mr. Gregory Grossman, a Research Fellow. It was published in 1953 in the opening essay of a formidable American symposium, *Soviet Economic Growth*, edited by Professor Abram Bergson of Columbia University. This symposium includes a number of very good papers on various aspects of Soviet economics, and a larger number of second-raters. The discussions (apparently carefully rehearsed) which follow each paper, resemble the proceedings of the most oleaginous type of Mutual Admiration Society, and critical judgements are few and far between. This seems to be in accordance with the new American standards of academic courtesy. But one can be critical without being discourteous, and render one's hearers a better service, in the long run, by being so.

Mr. Grossman's paper is quite good as far as it goes, though he only makes limited use of the available evidence. In his anxiety, however, to get a final figure, he goes far beyond what can be justified, even for the most tentative conclusion from the evidence which he has quoted. He states finally, albeit with a question-mark attached, that he finds a six and a half to seven per cent per annum rate of growth. This statement was followed by some particularly inept remarks by Professor Bergson, who spoke as if he had been thinking of raising the figure still higher in the light of some index figures of industrial production. That, because of the extremely poor rate of progress in agriculture, the overall rate of growth must be much below the rate of growth of industrial production, is a point which apparently did not occur to him.

Now let us turn back to Mr. Grossman's "conclusions." He works out the rate of growth for two periods, 1928–37 and 1948–50. For the first period, he gives his own figure of six and a half to seven per cent per annum rate of growth, and he also quotes some lower figures, worked out (in publications elsewhere) by Dr. Jasny and myself, of four and a half to five and a half per cent. Different results are obtained by different methods, for reasons not easily grasped by those unfamiliar with statistical technique; but it is of some importance to analyse them. When compiling a composite index number for the production of a number of different commodities, it is necessary to attach a "weight" of relative importance to each. A favourite Soviet device was, at one time, to attach weights derived from the year 1926–7, when the number of tractors, motor trucks, etc. produced was very limited, and the few which were produced had an extraordinarily high value. This ingenious statistical device enormously exaggerates such goods, and diverts attention away from the distressing performance of Soviet agriculture, to whose product a relatively low weight had been attached. Every critic is now aware of this distortion (though there were many reputable economists who were taken in by it during the 1930's). Mr. Grossman and Professor Bergson set out to correct it by using 1937 weights. This is a step in the right direction, but it has not gone far enough. In 1937, many goods were still produced in Russia at costs far in excess of their real value, judged by the prices at which they could be sold in the outside world. A distorted value still attached, therefore, to increases of production of such goods, and

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inadequate account was taken of the course of affairs in agriculture. This applies particularly to the food produced by peasant families which they retain for their own use, now a heavily declining element in the Russian economy. Professor Bergson has not given adequate statistical weight to this decline.

My own calculations, now revised, indicate a somewhat lower rate of growth, over the period 1928–37, than that intimated in my previous books. This revision comes mainly from studying post-war Soviet figures. Over the whole period 1928–40 my own estimate would show an overall estimate of increase of total production of about four and a half per cent per year.

There are, however, many reasons for expecting that the annual rate of increase of production during the period, which I put at four and a half per cent (and Mr. Grossman puts at six and a half per cent), cannot be kept up for very long. Mr. Grossman himself tentatively indicates the possibility of such a slowing down in the rate of growth, though many of his fellow-writers in *Soviet Economic Growth* do not seem to have agreed with him. It is one of the simplest rules of arithmetic, that when you start from a very low level, you should be able to show, at first, a fairly high percentage rate of increase. The level of production in 1928, though a great improvement on that of the worst years of the Revolution and Civil War, was nevertheless hardly any higher than it had been in 1913, and there was clearly room for much further improvement. There was, at that time, a good deal of under-occupied labour in Russian agriculture. Every such under-occupied man who could be transferred to any sort of industrial employment represented a considerable economic gain. During the period 1928–37, the numbers in industrial employment were indeed increasing at a rate of no less than ten per cent per year. Such a rate of increase obviously cannot go on for very long, or there will be no one left to produce food.

THE other period surveyed by Mr. Grossman is 1948–50. Now the important thing is that Mr. Grossman is *not* able to state the increase of production over this period. All he has, he states frankly, are "indirect bits of evidence"; and very indirect and very bitty they are. In any case, it is quite impermissible to use such a period as 1948–50 to estimate a trend and project it into the future. It might have been deduced, on common-sense grounds—and in any case is abundantly demonstrated by experiences in other countries—that when a country is showing a fairly steady trend of economic growth, which is sharply checked by war or any such cause, there will afterwards naturally follow a period of recovery, with growth at a rate well above the normal, until production gets "back on to the trend line," after which the normal rate of growth is again resumed.

During the years 1948–50, and indeed for some years afterwards, the Russian economy was still very much in this recovery phase. In a country like the United States, where the war did comparatively little damage to the economy, it might be reasonable for an American to take the experience of the years 1948–50 to indicate the trend of economic growth in his own country. But he will get wildly mistaken ideas if he applies this method to Russia, or even to some other countries in Europe. Painful and costly though the process of recovery and rebuilding is, it is nevertheless more rapid than the rate at which a country can make economic advances in fields which it has not yet entered. The long-period rate of economic growth in Russia must be measured, as it is in other countries, by comparing product or product-per-man, as it is now, with what it was in pre-war years. It is true that Russia suffered great war devastation and disorganisation. But so did countries like Japan and Italy; nevertheless, they show a very satisfactory long-period rate of growth, when present-day figures are compared with pre-war.

The rate of growth of total product will be a composite of the rate of growth of real product-per-man-hour of work done, of the rate of increase of the working population, and of any change in the number of hours worked per week. We can consider these

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factors separately. Between 1928 and 1938, real product-per-man-hour in the Soviet economy appears to have grown at the rate of 1·6 per cent per annum and between 1938 and 1953 at the rate of 2 per cent per annum. These can be described as moderately good rates of progress, but no more. The United States, ever since the 1890's, has been keeping up a steady rate of progress of 2·3 per cent per annum. The difference between Russian and American productivity has therefore been widening, not narrowing.

Rates of economic progress higher than Soviet Russia, even during this last period, when it has been at its highest, have been shown—to list the countries in alphabetical order—by Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, and Sweden, as well as the United States. The essential cause of this slow rate of growth has been the extraordinary failure of Soviet agriculture. As another factor making for low real income, we might also mention the extraordinary low amount of housing available to the average Soviet citizen. Putting it another way, the process of manufacture and transport, which are highly organised, and involve large numbers of men working under strict supervision, will to some degree respond to Communist methods of management. Where these methods fail is in trying to produce two of the things which people need most—food and housing. The facts of the case are that these products are best produced by individual effort, and, in spite of thirty years' attempting to alter them, the facts remain substantially the same.

The extraordinarily disappointing record of Soviet agriculture can be followed in official statistics. Valuing Russian agricultural output on the farm, at world wholesale prices, we get a gross output (before making deductions for equipment, fertiliser, etc.) of only about £100 per year per head of the male agricultural labour force. Even in 1913, the corresponding figure was £80. At the worst period of the collectivisation crisis, about 1932, it was down to £55. It was said, and it was largely true, that before mechanisation and reorganisation, Soviet agricultural labour was under-occupied, and much labour was wasted. But there seem to be ways of wasting labour under collective farming too. In spite of the extensive use of machinery, output per man was hardly any higher than it was before. Unless we go a long way back in time it is difficult to find any European country for comparison, where the value of agricultural output per man is as low as it is in Russia. Even in Italy, productivity passed this point some 30 or 40 years ago.

Only a decreasing proportion of the Russian labour force has been allowed to remain in agriculture, in order to provide labour for industry. With a comparatively stationary product per man, the amount of food available per head of the whole consuming population has actually declined. In the good years at the end of the 1920's, and in one or two good years at the end of the late 1930's, average food consumption per head just about got back to where it had been in 1913; but during the collectivisation crisis it was far lower, and it is a good deal lower now, after all these years of collective farming. Whatever else Soviet agriculture can do, it cannot feed the Russian people properly. While there has been an advance in the production of one or two crops like sugar beet and cotton, and a supply of grain just about adequate, there has been an extreme shortage of meat and dairy products, for the essential reason that the care of animals requires individual effort, and cannot be centrally organised. Most of the horses in Russia have now been disposed of, which should have freed a good deal of pasture and fodder for other animals. Yet the number of pigs in 1953 was only a few per cent higher than it had been in 1928, the number of sheep and goats was lower, and the number of dairy cows, the most important farm animal, was actually twenty-five per cent less. It was to the shocking failure of dairy production that Khrushchev devoted some of the most critical passages in his sensational speech on the failures of Soviet agriculture, shortly after Stalin's death.

These facts are all brought out in the United Nations' *Economic Survey of Europe*

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1953, a document whose compilers have generally shown a tendency to accept Soviet claims. This same publication also brings out the fact that the present stock of tractors is capable of performing the work-equivalent of 19 million horses. However, the decrease in the number of horses between 1928 and 1953 was 21 million. Furthermore, the servicing and maintenance of tractors is so bad that, even in the busiest season of the year, between fifty and eighty-five per cent of them are not on duty, but are in the workshops. Whatever may be the case about making tractors, servicing them seems to be another field in which individual enterprise is required.

THE most important facts about housing in Soviet Russia are soon told. The average English council house has a floor space of 1,050 sq. ft. (most new family houses built in the U.S. are now also about this size). If this is occupied by a family of five people, that is to say if there is 210 sq. ft. of floor space for each person, we think that it is rather fully occupied. In pre-revolutionary Russia, in 1913, the average amount of floor space available per head of the urban population was only 75 sq. ft. In other words, a dwelling the size of an ordinary English council house would have been occupied, not by five, but fourteen people. Shocking overcrowding, you will say. So it is by our standards; but it is an unattainably high standard for the Russian people to look back to, when compared with housing conditions under Soviet rule. By 1928, when the damage of the First World War and the Revolution was supposed to have been repaired, the average amount of housing space per head of the urban population was only 65 sq. ft. The "First Five Year Plan" did plenty of planning, but little building. The growth of the industrial population far exceeded the available new housing, and by 1932 the amount of housing space per person had fallen to 53 sq. ft. After that the position did not improve, but went on getting worse, and the figure had fallen to 43 sq. ft. per person by 1938. The best indications available show that it is about the same today. This means that a dwelling the size of an ordinary English council house would have to house not fourteen people, as it would have had to do under pre-revolutionary housing standards; it would now have to house twenty-four.

These are figures for the urban population. For the rural population less precise figures are available; what does seem fairly clear is that standards are still worse, by a considerable margin, than they are in the cities, with large families living in one-roomed huts. Governmental building is entirely concentrated in the cities, and the peasants have to build what they can for themselves. So much of their produce is seized by the Soviet Government at a nominal price that they have very little money to buy building materials (it must be remembered that most areas of Russia lack any local resources of timber, which has to be brought from a distance).

STARTING from a low level the overall rate of growth of Soviet production between 1928 and 1940 reached the fairly high figure of 4½ per cent per annum, which figure was a composite of a 1·6 per cent per annum rate of growth of real product-per-man-hour because of a drastic increase in the length of the working week towards the end of the period, and of a working population increasing fairly rapidly. But the number of births showed a dramatic fall about 1930. (It is not for nothing that the publication of birth statistics was suppressed in that year, and that none has been published since.) This means that the rate of increase of the working population must have shown a sharp fall from about 1945 onwards (taking the average age of entry into work as fifteen).

As a matter of fact, the Soviet population figures are in greater obscurity than any other economic statistics. In the complete absence of information some (but a diminishing number) observers still point to Russia as a country where people happily bring up large families. The Russian and Eastern European delegates at the World Population Conference in 1954 spoke trenchantly against British and American Malthusian Propa-

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ganda; but they refrained from giving the simplest present-day figures about their own countries, or from commenting on the cautious estimates made by one or two outside statisticians.

The statistical difficulties of concealment on such a subject as population, have apparently, on one or two occasions, led Russian statisticians to break their usual rule, and actually to publish false statements (which are of course eventually nailed by outside critics). Twenty or thirty years ago, when Stalin used to give regular reports of Soviet progress to the annual conference of the Communist Party, one of the first figures which he used to quote, with schoolmasterish gusto, was that the population had increased by three to four millions during the year. He went on making this claim, in almost identical terms each year, up to 1934. Then there was sudden silence on the subject. A census was taken in 1937, but the result apparently came out so much lower than Stalin had claimed that the entire census was suppressed. Another census was taken in 1939. This time they just managed to get the figure of population up to the level which Stalin had already claimed for 1934! If the previous figures were true there must have been a sudden and complete cessation of population growth over a period of five years. We have to choose between the hypotheses (1) that Stalin deliberately falsified the figures or that he invented them, and the responsible officials did not dare to tell the "Old Man" that he was wrong, or (2) that Stalin and his advisers actually did not know what the population was.

The actual facts, so far as we can ascertain them, were that there was during the 1930's a great check to population growth, and probably in some years an actual decline. This was due, on the one hand, to a great fall in births, and on the other hand to millions of deaths during the "collectivisation of agriculture," from famine and from forced labour.

IF THERE has been a post-war Soviet census, the world has not heard about it. The few post-war official statements on this subject claim a population growth of about three million per annum, and also a very low death-rate. The 1939 population of what now constitutes Soviet territory was slightly over 200 millions. The excess of war-time deaths above normal mortality was calculated by the French demographer, M. Vincent, at the dreadful figure of 17 millions (most of these being civilians). Western statisticians who have attempted to piece together the fragmentary official statements conclude that Soviet population is now about 215 millions. Allowing for war losses, this represents a net increase of about two millions, or only one per cent per year, since 1939. But then, in a speech in January 1955, Khrushchev remarked that the Soviet population was "about 200 millions" and went on to add that, in his opinion, a population of 300 million would still be too few. He demanded that more Russian parents bring up a three-child family. This indicates a much lower rate of population growth.

If we compare the official claims of death-rate and of population growth we are in any case led to the conclusion that the birth-rate is now very much lower than it was, and this supposition is fortified by figures showing a heavy fall in the primary school population. Making the best interpretation of the available evidence, it appears that the net rate of increase of the Soviet population is now very low. It is, however, apparently necessary to put up a bluff of high and rapidly increasing population, to help intimidate other countries.

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Richard Murphy

Three poems

GIRL AT SEASIDE

I lean on lighthouse rock
Where sea-gowns flow,
A trawler slips from dock
Sailing years ago.

Wine, tobacco, seamen
Cloud the green air,
A head in snakes of rain
Talks away desire.

A sailor kisses me
Tasting of mackerel,
I analyse misery
Till mass bells peal.

I wait for clogs on cobbles,
Dead feet at night,
Only a tempest blows
Darkness on sea-light.

I've argued myself here
To the blue cliff-top:
I'll drop into sea-air
Until the talk stop.

AUCTION

When furniture is moved
From a dead-free home
Through lean, loved
Rooms alone I come.

To bid for damp etchings,
My great-aunt's chair,
Drawers where rings
Of ruby in water flare.

A sacked gardener
Shows me yew-hedges
House-high, where
The dead made marriages.

With what shall I buy
From time's auctioneer
This property?
Poor words I'll offer.

SAMSON'S SECRET

In a sea-lit room he slept
His head lapped by her thighs.
Gently the knife reaped
While a sea-wind rose.

If he could continue
On her white neck
To unlock what he knew
They'd grow, with luck.

But peasant children bark
From a forgotten year
"Keep it dark, keep it dark"
And "Love is fear."

Now the wine is poured,
His feeble secret told.
And she is bored.
What has he withheld?

Nothing, except the terror
Felt in revealing all.
For this blind fear
He trudged the mill.

Lastly, that she and those
Sea-born relatives
Should reap no more, he rose
And wrecked the archives.

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TABLE TALK

ALTHOUGH I was told in Paris that it was dull, self-righteous, and trivial, I nevertheless persisted in my intention of reading André Marty's apologia, and am very happy that I did. *L'Affaire Marty* is no more a work of literature than is Mr. Bevan's *In Place of Fear*. But it is most decidedly a document for our time. Here is the Communist *militant* stripped, expelled by the Party, slowly, bitterly awakening to the fact that the Party has betrayed him, dishonoured him, unmade the legendary hero of the Black Sea and put in its place another *image d'Epinal*: the police spy betraying the workers, that is the "workers' party," ever since 1919. In a way, the book is an unconsciously funny one. In its stuttering indignation, it recalls a famous Peter Arno drawing of a big shot in dishevelled white tie and tails shouting to the unimpressed policeman "you can't do this to me." But, as Marty now realises, they *have* done it to him—have swept out of existence his files, his car, his "*compagne*," his function, his past, and have put in its place an odious, traitorous figure as a preliminary to abolishing him altogether. That last job is already well in hand: the photographs are being touched up, and in the most recent edition of Thorez' autobiography, Marty has simply been erased from the side of Thorez. It is enough to make lesser men indignant: this to *me*, André Marty, who mutinied, who risked death, who has suffered prison again and again, who has been held up to the militants as the model militant, who has had the power of life and death in Spain, who has lived with and among the workers, who was a real worker, a skilled worker, who has never been petted by left-wing duchesses, who has lived in and with the workers and the workers' party! Never was a *déception d'amour* more candidly revealed.

It would be wrong to say that the book is really moving. It is hard to forget that the victim has blood on his hands. (Has the recent Russian decision to praise *For Whom the Bell Tolls* anything to do with the fact that Marty, the most odious figure in the book, is now no longer a Party asset to be protected?) But it is fascinating for the very literary incompetence of the author; his little scraps of culture, like his quotations from Hugo; his repetitions; his attempt to make of his treatment a symbol of a general betrayal. He is no hero out of *Darkness at Noon*; he has no memories of summer afternoons in the park of a Russian country house, no subtle reflections on the crimes he has committed for the Party. His memories are more of drab November days in the thirteenth arrondissement, of cold and hunger in military prisons and, of course, though this is not stressed so much as taken as part of the "truth about Marty," the great meetings, the cheers the great days of 1936 and 1944, the days before his glory was snatched from him by the "*fils du peuple*," Thorez, by the tireless intriguer, Duclos.

What is pathetic, if not quite moving, is the isolation in which Marty finds himself when the Party decides to asphyxiate him. We all know the mystery story of the mother and daughter in Paris, at the time of a great exhibition—of the sudden disappearance of one of them, of the stout denial by all witnesses that the daughter had ever come to the hotel, had ever existed. So it was with Marty. He who had lived in the party iron lung for thirty years was left gasping for identity when the apparatus was put out of action. We are now being told how wrong *1984* was and is, but here is *1984* all the more convincing because the victim is one to whom it is so tempting to say "*vous l'avez voulu*."

FROM another point of view, the apologia is important. It is an appeal from the Party bureaucracy to the Party members, to the "*peuple*." It is a protest against the

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destruction of the libertarian tradition that Marty says—and we may believe him—brought him into the Party. We have heard a lot from intellectuals who have been or have remained Party members, but not much from the natural recruits from among the workers. Marty was one of those. He tells us more than once that, by mutinying, he lost his chance of a career as an officer in the navy or the merchant marine. (He was a kind of warrant officer in 1919.) He has the pride of the skilled worker (he was a *mécanicien*), and of one who "wrought at his trade," as they used to say on Willie Gallagher's Clyde. He has no use for the "workers," who do a year or two in a mine or factory then settle down in the Party as professional "workers," i.e. as politicians. Some of the old suspicion of the politician, deep rooted in the French worker's traditions, remained in Marty, even when he was a devoted member of the Party. We may believe him when he asserts that he was an unwilling deputy. We may believe him more easily when he declares that he, at least, did not join the "*république des camarades*," did not attack a bourgeois deputy bitterly in the Assembly, then slap him on the back in the bar.

He had not come to the Party—he was born to it. He was, as he reminds us more than once, the son of a Communard. His father, however, did not serve the historic commune of Paris, but took part in the much less heroic efforts to imitate it that marked the Midi in the spring of 1871. And the father was a Catalan by origin and André Marty is in a sense a "*métèque*," with one eye on the ancestral province, with memories of Monjuich as well as of the "*mur des fédérés*" to sustain his immortal hate of the bourgeois world. There is in his attitude to leaders like Thorez or to party poetasters like Aragon, a supreme contempt for a new recruit, newcomers not only in the sense that he was a proletarian hero when they were unknown, but that he was born into the aristocracy of the "*peuple*." Looking at the intellectual recruits to the Party, Marty might say with St. Paul "But I was free born" and they, to be truthful, would have had to say "With a great sum obtained I this freedom."

For that is another lesson of the book. Marty nowhere admits or repents his own share in methods of Party warfare every bit as base as those which were used against him. Indeed, knowledge of what the Party can do, might well intimidate a fearful man into not leaving it. M. Aragon might remember the campaign against Paul Nizan, if he were ever tempted to any dangerous thoughts or ill-disciplined action. We are led, again, into the world of outrageous mendacity and sluttish invective that seems inseparable from the whole Bolshevik ethos. It doesn't matter whether Marty or Duclos are liars or whether, as is likely, both are. What a set! What a way to build the society of free men, liberated from *damnosa hereditas* of the past! The point where Marty came nearest touching me, was in his account of the hopes with which he joined the Party. Here was, no doubt, a way of vengeance for his father, but also the last, best hope. But was the party any better then than it is now? It was less muscle-bound, less merely bureaucratic. The lesson had not been repeated a score of times. But it had been given—given before Lenin arrived at the Finland Station. And so I read, with a suspension of credulity, the explanations of the various ex-Bolshevists on the exact date that the Party went wrong (it is when it threw them out or they jumped off the train of History). I should have more sympathy with them, more readiness to believe their latest reading of the Russian tea leaves, if they could say "in my end was my beginning." But even Trotsky, we may assume, didn't know what hit him.

D. W. Brogan

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Gertrude Himmelfarb: MALTHUS

THE study of "great books" can be a bewildering and humiliating enterprise for the historian. He is obliged to pay homage to the superior prescience of the contemporaries of the great book, who may have recognised instantly a quality of greatness that he, after long and judicious study, may never come to see. He is besieged by problems that do not seem to have troubled them. Books that the least of them read and apparently understood effortlessly, he, a "professional," may find hardly comprehensible. And he is likely to be confronted with a mass of facts pertinent to the great book, accumulated by later generations with the most innocent of intentions but provoking the discourteous question: why was it this book, rather than its predecessor or successor, that has become *the* great book? Or the even more ungracious one: why was it this man, rather than another, who happened to be its author?

If the historian is fortunate, or sufficiently resourceful, he may be able to locate a minority among the book's contemporaries to share his unpopular opinion. In Malthus' time there was such a minority, most of it, perhaps—the preachers, pamphleteers, reformers, and *pater familias* writing indignant letters to *The Times*—too sentimental for his taste; but a small group—Coleridge, Southey, Hazlitt, and a few others—to whom he can retire for comfort and refuge.

It was this anti-Malthus faction that created the mock-title of "Parson Malthus" for the mild-mannered, good-natured schoolteacher who had briefly served as a curate before taking up his more congenial academic post. The title, like the apocryphal story of his eleven daughters, was a feeble attempt to caricature a personality that did not take readily to caricature. For Malthus was, in his person, undistinguished, except perhaps for a hare-lip that did not seriously impair his speech. He had been graduated from Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1788 as ninth wrangler, and had been elected a fellow of his college several years later, resigning after ten years to get married. (One of the few kindly things Karl Marx found to say of him was not only curiously moralistic in tone but also wrong in fact: "Although Malthus was a parson of the English State Church, he had taken the monastic vow of celibacy, one of the conditions of holding a fellowship in Protestant Cambridge University. . . . This circumstance favourably distinguishes Malthus from the other Protestant parsons, who have shuffled off the command enjoining celibacy of the priesthood.") He was almost forty when he was appointed Professor of Modern History and Political Economy at the East India College in Haileybury. Here, occupying the first chair of political economy to be established in England, he passed a peaceful life, rearing his children (three, not eleven), teaching his students, and entertaining his friends with a benevolence and good cheer that were in marked contrast to the melancholic books he was writing at the same time, to say nothing of the image of the splenetic misanthrope circulated by his enemies.

In temperament, Thomas Robert Malthus (generally known as Robert) took after his father, Daniel—in temperament but not in mind. With Daniel Malthus, benevolence

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had found its appropriate outlet in the philosophy of the Enlightenment. A friend and admirer of Rousseau, he cherished the whole of his life the memory of his botanising walks with Rousseau, and the fact that the two apparently discoursed about nothing more memorable than the flora of Derbyshire did not cool Malthus' ardour. His devotion was expressed not only in a dozen passionate letters to Rousseau, but also in a predilection for utopians of other varieties: for Condorcet, writing of the progress and perfectibility of man as exhibited in the French Revolution, while hiding away from the Revolutionary authorities who were shortly to guillotine him; and for William Godwin, acclaiming the virtues of anarchy and equality from the safe distance of monarchic England.

It was a volume of Godwin's essays, published in 1797 under the title of *Enquirer*, that gave Robert Malthus his inspiration. His father had been particularly taken with the essay on "Avarice and Profusion" in which Godwin had argued, with more earnestness than elegance, that a state of economic and social equality was best in keeping with the nature of man and "most conducive to the extensive diffusion of felicity." Perhaps playing the part of devil's advocate, Robert found himself saying that all such utopias, Condorcet's as well as Godwin's, would inevitably sink under the burden of a population far outweighing the food supply. Daniel Malthus, whether from conviction or from paternal pride triumphing over conviction, urged his son to publish these views. The following year, in 1798, appeared *An Essay on the Principle of Population, as it affects the future improvement of Society, with remarks on the speculations of Mr. Godwin, M. Condorcet, and other writers.* Although it appeared anonymously, Malthus' authorship was public knowledge.

THE history of the publication of the *Essay* foreshadows, as it also inspired, that of the *Origin of Species*. In both cases, the authors were obliged to preface their works with statements of their indebtedness to others: Malthus cited David Hume, Adam Smith, Richard Price, and Robert Wallace (not to be confused with the Alfred Russel Wallace who appeared in Darwin's tributes). And it was characteristic of both that, as time went on, they, or their vigilant contemporaries, should have found more and more predecessors for views that, at first sight, had seemed so novel and even revolutionary. Thus, in his second edition, Malthus had to add the names of Montesquieu, Benjamin Franklin, James Steuart, Arthur Young, and Joseph Townsend, none of whom he had actually read before writing his own book, and some of whom strenuously objected to the *Essay*.

Historians are hard put to it to decide why it was that the *Essay on Population*, rather than Franklin's *Observations concerning the Increase of Mankind and the Peopling of Countries*, published forty-three years earlier, or Wallace's *Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature, and Providence*, published thirty-seven years earlier, should have attracted the attention of the world, creating a new view of the present and a new prospect for the future. They cite the wars with France, making the public receptive to attacks upon "subversive" French ideas; the poverty and shortage of food which were so plausibly accounted for by Malthus; and the census of 1801, confirming his thesis about population growth. These explanations, however, are not entirely satisfactory. For in spite of the French wars and anti-revolutionary sentiment, Malthus was much abused by the public, and was execrated by even so staunch a Francophobe as Coleridge. Food shortages and poverty had always claimed the attention of theorists, and in the case of at least one, Joseph Townsend, author of a *Dissertation on the Poor Laws* in 1786, to much the same effect as with Malthus. And the census of 1801, even if it could be taken to confirm his thesis, could not have affected the public response in 1798; in fact, it was largely irrelevant, since it was the first census of its kind and so could not establish comparative figures for the growth of population.

The fact that the *Essay* was originally issued as a rebuttal to Godwin and Condorcet had the tactical advantage of placing Malthus in the limelight with his more famous contemporaries. This bit of lucky staging, however, could not alone have succeeded in keeping him in the limelight long after Godwin and Condorcet had vacated it. The genius of Malthus was not only in setting the stage so well, but also in playing his part so adeptly. His contemporar-

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ies testified to this when they accounted for his success by his "striking and authoritative manner." For it was the simple fact of his manner, rather than the more remote and indirect causes fancied by the historian (in the illusion that the more remote and indirect the cause, the more profound the explanation) that gave him his great advantage over his predecessors.

Where others had expressed, and thus dissipated, the same point in the course of an elaborate, many-sided argument, Malthus captured it in a single, easily memorised formula which had the arresting quality of an advertising slogan: "Population, when unchecked, increases in a geometrical ratio. Subsistence increases only in an arithmetic ratio." "A slight acquaintance with numbers," he continued, "will show the immensity of the first power in comparison with the second." But in case his readers should be not even so slightly acquainted with numbers, he did their calculating for them. While the population was increasing every twenty-five years at the rate of 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256 . . ., the food supply was increasing, during the same time, at the rate of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 . . ., so that in two centuries the ratio of population to food, if not interfered with, would be 256 to 9, in three centuries 4,096 to 13, and so on, in proportions which anyone able to perform the simplest arithmetical operations could calculate to his own satisfaction. There was a mesmeric quality in these numbers, not only in their astronomical potentialities, but also in their concreteness and precision. One can visualise the dazed reader reaching for pencil and paper to check Malthus' figures, and perhaps carried away by the sport, extending them for another century or two, finally looking up with astonishment to confirm his "accuracy," as if the very nature of the mathematical series was somehow confirmation of his theory. It is only by some such reconstruction that one can explain the assertion of the historian Hallam that the mathematical basis of Malthus' argument was as certain as the multiplication table.

THE myth that "figures don't lie" has a firm hold upon the modern mind, as advertisers have discovered to their great profit. There is no more effective appeal than that some product is "64 per cent purer"; the vision of a white-frocked laboratory technician surrounded by test-tubes and beakers (for who else would presume to issue so precise and authoritative a figure?) dispels the obvious questions: purer than what, and how? Malthus' figures have something of the same supposititious quality, and the trappings of his laboratory the same spurious air.

The vital formula was deduced, or induced—the terms are equally inapt—from three pages of evidence and reasoning out of a 396-page work (or the same number of pages out of the 600 of the second edition). The process of induction and/or deduction consisted in selecting population figures at random from a variety of unreliable sources, sifting, stirring, and spicing them with his own blend of approximations, extrapolations, guesses, and *a priori* assumptions, and serving them up in the shape of a magic formula. If the ingredients are analysed, it appears that the 25-year period of the formula, during which time the population reputedly doubles itself, could as well have been, from his own data, 20, 15, or 10 years. Depending upon which figure was chosen, the resulting population figures would then have been more than doubled. The reader of the *Essay* might have been shocked to realise that perhaps the ratio of population to food at the end of three centuries should have been, not 4,096 to 13, but 8,192 (or some such figure) to 13—a margin of error that is more impressive than the figures themselves.

Nor was the figure of 13, compact as it is, any more reliable. If anything, it was more speculative, for it was patently impossible to calculate, or even estimate, how much land was totally or partially uncultivated, how much of this was fertile, how long it would take to make it productive and how much it might then produce, what labour would be required and available, when the point of diminishing returns would be reached, and a host of other incalculables that would defeat the most enterprising statistician. Finally, to project all of these present uncertainties into the future was to multiply the errors, as Malthus might say, geometrically.

The difficulty, moreover, is not only that the evidence was faulty and inconclusive, but that the nature of the theory precluded the possibility of any evidence at all. If the population can never exceed the food supply, as

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Malthus maintained, then how can it be proved that, "when unchecked," the population multiplies geometrically and the food supply arithmetically—or, indeed, that it is the food supply that invariably checks the population? Indeed the very pretence of evidence is itself damning to the theory. One of his main exhibits in support of his formula for the growth of population was America, where the population was estimated to have doubled itself every twenty-five years —a process that had been going on, according to his authorities, not for one or even two generations but for almost two centuries, from "the first settlement of America to the year 1800." What, then, had been happening to the food supply during this time? Had it also been multiplying geometrically? Or had the geometrically increasing population somehow managed to subsist on an arithmetically increasing food supply? Either alternative is damning to the theory. Or, if the example of America should be ruled to be inadmissible, as being too exceptional a situation, there is the example of England cited by Bonar, Malthus' biographer and chief advocate. As evidence of the slow rate of increase of the food supply, he showed that during a century of the most intensive cultivation, the production of wheat had increased only from 23 to 28 bushels per acre; at the same time, he casually added, the population had grown from 6 to 35 million!

If pressed, to be sure, Malthus and his admirers might have admitted that the formula was not literally true, that it was intended only as a symbolic representation of the facts. Bonar indulgently attributed it to the "natural liking of a Cambridge man for a mathematical simile." Shorn of its figures, however, and reduced to mere words—no longer "4096 : 13" but only the unexciting "more" and "less"—the formula loses its magical potency and is reduced to a cliché. As Coleridge commented in the margin of his copy of the *Essay*: "Are we now to have a Quarto to teach us that great misery and great vice arise from Poverty, and that there must be Poverty in its worst shape wherever there are more mouths than Loaves and more Heads than Brains!"

YET many of those who might have been shrewd enough to discern the mathematical weaknesses of the formula could not entirely free themselves from the illusion that it was, if not precisely mathematical, then in some other manner scientific, and that this redeemed it from the triviality of the cliché. The scientific character with which it was thus endowed, since it could not be mathematical, was assumed to be empirical or inductive.

Lord Keynes, for example, normally the most astute of critics, quoted Coleridge as if his criticism were legitimate for the first edition of the *Essay* but not for the second (although in fact, as he knew, the annotation appeared in Coleridge's copy of the second edition). This distinction between the first and second editions has been taken to be crucial, not only for the understanding of Malthus himself, but for all of modern sociology. The first edition, as Keynes and others have seen it, contained the bold, *a priori* generalisations of the theory, couched in the language of rhetoric and the bravura of sentiment; the second edition, by contrast, was a careful and extensive presentation of facts. It was the difference between political philosophy and political science. And it is on this second edition (the first having become rare not long after its publication) that his posthumous reputation was built, with such eminent economists as Alfred Marshall paying tribute to it as "the first thorough application of the inductive method to social science," and to Malthus as one of the founders of the "modern historical school of economics"; and Keynes praising those "inductive verifications" which earned him the title of a "pioneer in sociological history."

What prompted Malthus to issue a second edition was not only the interest aroused by the first, but also the criticisms which had been levelled against it. The first edition, he confessed, had been written "on the impulse of the occasion, and from the few materials which were then within reach in a country situation." Only after its publication had he been made aware of how much had been thought and written on the subject since, as he said, the days of Plato and Aristotle. He therefore set himself to read these neglected authorities, and he embarked on two tours of Europe to gather first-hand information. In 1803, five years after the first edition, appeared the second, a volume almost quadrupled in length (the comparison of pages

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does not do justice to the full extent of the change, since the first was elegantly and sparsely printed), altered in structure, augmented by one crucial theoretical principle, and bearing a new title. Mr. Godwin and M. Condorcet were eliminated from the title, and the "Future Improvement of Society" was subordinated to the "Past and Present Effects on Human Happiness."

Although a good many things had changed between the two editions, the basic "principle of population" advertised in both titles purported to be unchanged, with the same ratios producing the same numerical results. In fact, however, the significant change was not in the addition of the mass of evidence making up the bulk of the book and intended to confirm the principle. It was, instead, in the addition of one crucial proposition to the structure of the argument. And this proposition had the effect of vitiating the very principle which he had gone to such pains to illustrate.

IN THE first edition, Malthus' argument had been fairly simple. It was based upon two postulates: that "food is necessary to the existence of man"; and that "the passion between the sexes is necessary, and will remain nearly in its present state." The first was undisputed; the second was made necessary because Godwin, in common with many rationalists (John Stuart Mill was to hold the same belief), felt that the intellectual and moral progress of man would bring about a weakening of the sexual passion. From these two postulates, Malthus deduced that population is limited only by the availability of food, or, more generally, the means of subsistence; and that subsistence operates to limit population by way of misery and vice. Misery—famine, plague, and the like—was nature's device to limit population, while vice—war, infanticide, and whatever human excesses tend to limit procreation and reduce life—was man's. This, then, was his initial thesis: that only misery and vice kept the population from soaring to the astronomical heights of which biology and geometry, joined in evil alliance, made it capable.

His critics were not long in finding the flaw in this stark picture. They did not even have to venture outside of their own country to be able to demonstrate that in reality the population did not always press against the food supply in the same unrelenting way. Godwin cited the undeniable fact that in England "virtue, prudence and pride," in addition to misery and vice, led to the postponement of marriage and the curbing of the birth-rate. He properly concluded that Malthus had vastly underestimated the resources of the human mind and thus the real possibilities of progress.

The second edition of the *Essay* was an unacknowledged admission that Godwin had been right. For Malthus now introduced, as a major category, what he called the "preventive check" or "moral restraint." By the "preventive check" he meant whatever check operated to prevent new lives from coming into being, in contrast to the "positive check" which shortened or removed lives—the preventive check being reflected in the birth-rate, the positive check in the death-rate. By "moral restraint" he meant that particular form of preventive check which involved "the restraint from marriage which is not followed by irregular gratification." Sometimes he spoke of misery, vice, and moral restraint as the three checks upon population. At other times he redistributed these checks into the two categories of preventive and positive checks, with the result that moral restraint and vice (the vice of contraception, for example) were placed in an uneasy propinquity.

The effect of this appropriation of his critics' idea was not only to arouse their indignation at being so ill-used, but to provoke them to the retort that Malthus, in amending his argument, had also taken up an entirely new position. He was now admitting what he had set out to refute: that the population did not necessarily increase as the food supply increased, and that, therefore, a real improvement and progress in the lives of men was possible.

What had happened to Malthus was what often happens to reasonable men possessed by extreme ideas: in attempting to meet the legitimate objections of their critics, they concede, qualify, and amend until their once radical ideas approach the state of conventionality or truism. Malthus' argument was no longer vulnerable to the criticisms made of the first edition: he had made certain of this by setting up categories so all-embracing that nothing was excluded from them, for what was not a positive check must be a preventive

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check. But neither could it any longer be shown to support his original thesis, for self-restraint—whether from motives of morality or vice—now came as a buffer between the population and its food supply, between men and misery.

THAT Malthus should have chosen just this time to introduce the mass of "inductive verification" for which he has been so highly esteemed, is surely an illustration of what the psychoanalyst calls compensation, or what Santayana, in another context, described in the man who redoubles his efforts when he has forgotten his aim. Coleridge made the same point: "All that follows to the 355th page may be an entertaining farrago of quotations from Books of Travels, etc., but surely very impertinent in a philosophical work. Bless me, 340 pages—for what purpose! A philosophical work can have no legitimate purpose but proof and illustration, and 350 [sic] pages to prove an axiom! To illustrate a self-evident Truth! It is neither more nor less than Book-making!"

The "inductive verifications" of Keynes, or the "book-making" as Coleridge would have had it, consisted of a survey of all past and present history, ranging from primitive societies, Biblical tribes, ancient Greece and Rome, and the Near and Far East, to the modern states of Europe. The documentation attests to an impressive amount of reading and research, and for some purposes, perhaps as a record of the state of learning in England at the opening of the 19th century, it might still be useful today. But neither then nor now can it be taken as relevant to any particular thesis about population. The only generalisation which emerged from it is that every people in every age has had to cope in its own way with the problems of livelihood, a generalisation which no one is likely to dispute. It would be pointless to pick quarrels with this mass of evidence, to expose the errors of fact, the non-sequitors and inconsistencies. What can it matter if vice is seen now as the consequence of poverty, now as the consequence of luxury, if neither poverty nor luxury has any direct bearing on the question of population? What, indeed, can any recital of errors signify, when Malthus has so candidly discounted all errors in advance? "I have taken as much pains," he wrote in the preface to the second edition, "to avoid any errors in the facts and calculations which have been produced in the course of the work. Should any of them nevertheless turn out to be false, the reader will see that they will not materially affect the general scope of the reasoning." So much for his much vaunted facts and figures.

If he still attracts attention today, it is for the same reason that his first edition excited attention; for its bold, unqualified, and apocalyptic vision. It is that vision which still converts or alienates men. In the recent discussion of population and food that goes by the name of "The Malthusian Controversy," the Malthusians are the demographers who gloomily predict a vast population increase in the backward countries that will far exceed the food supply and physical resources of those countries. In fact, however, what they predict is precisely what Malthus thought was impossible: a great increase of population in a country where the population was already exerting, a century and a half ago, what he regarded as an almost unbearable pressure upon the food supply. The bond between these demographers and Malthus is not scientific but temperamental; what they share is the same dark vision, not the same facts and theories.

ALTHOUGH the modern discussion of backward countries bears only a temperamental affinity to the ideas of Malthus, it does recall the importance of the Primitive in his thinking. For Malthus was as fascinated by the image of primitive man as were those more celebrated primitivists, Godwin and Condorcet. Like them, although less explicitly and less consciously, he based his philosophical system upon the supposed character of primitive man. The common assumption, apparently, for Malthus as for his "enlightened" contemporaries, was that by starting with primitive man, they were starting at bed-rock and building upon the firmest of foundations, an assumption that was not shaken by the knowledge that they entertained diametrically opposed views of what was presumed to be the most elementary of facts. To Godwin and Condorcet, the fundamental fact was the noble savage; to Malthus it was the bestial brute. And as Godwin and Condorcet envisaged the good life as a society liberated from artificial conventions and restored to the condition of the noble savage, so

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Malthus envisaged it as a fortress entrenched behind a barrier of physical and moral restraints to protect it from the misery and vice of primitive man.

Malthus' vision of primitive life is reminiscent of Hobbes' vision of life in the state of nature: nasty, mean, brutish, and short. But while Hobbes admitted that his natural man was only an abstraction, Malthus saw him as a thoroughly real and disagreeable person, even down to such picturesque details as the savage who abducted his bride by stealing upon her in the absence of her protectors, stupefying her with blows "every one of which is followed by a stream of blood," and dragging her home by one arm through the woods "regardless of the stone and broken pieces of trees that may lie in the route." Hobbes' mind did not run to such vivid, comic-cartoon images, nor to such spontaneous and unconcealed indignation. But his "realism" was of the same character as Malthus': for both what was most real was what was most primitive. It is for this reason that Hobbes was most successful in analysing a society with a simple, explicit, and unequivocal political authority; and Malthus in analysing the relationship of population and food among the aborigines of New South Wales, or, at most, among the lowest order of the English working class. All of the characteristics of maturity and sophistication that go with civilisation—science, technology, ideology, and morality—vitiated Malthus' conception, as their analogues—religion, law, and personality—vitiated Hobbes'. The hard-headed realism for which Hobbes and Malthus have both been praised, turns out, upon inspection, to have been a variety of simple-minded primitivism.

What at first appears to be most concrete and real in primitivism is, in fact, most abstract and hypothetical. Both Hobbes and Malthus saw, or thought they saw, everywhere the operation of a single, universal motive of action. For Hobbes, the motive was insecurity, a restless search for power and yet more power, since only in power could security be found. For Malthus it was the exact opposite: "A state of sloth, and not of restlessness and activity, seems evidently to be the natural state of man."

From this principle or axiom of sloth, the rest of Malthus' thesis followed. It was sloth that put men at the mercy of their sexual instincts, condemning them to live in a perpetual state of misery and vice, and exerting them to work only under the threat of starvation. And it was because of their tendency to relapse into sloth that such institutions as poor relief, foundling hospitals, family allowances, and parish-built cottages were anathema to him, for anything other than their own efforts that improved the condition of men would encourage their natural indolence. This axiom may also account for his attitude towards the Corn Laws, which has bewildered many commentators and grieved so faithful an admirer as Bonar. Neither the example of Adam Smith, the dictates of free trade, nor his own theory of rent, could wean Malthus away from protectionism in corn, possibly because he was reluctant to introduce any change that would lower prices, ease the condition of the poor, and bring out the old Adam in them, the sin of sloth.

It is strange to read, from the reputed founder of sociological history, the argument with which the philosopher and moralist has always sought to confound the sociologist: "The great error under which Mr. Godwin labours throughout his whole work is the attributing of almost all the vices and misery that prevail in civil society to human institutions. . . . But the truth is, that though human institutions appear to be, and indeed often are, the obvious and obtrusive causes of much mischief in society, they are, in reality, light and superficial in comparison with those deeper-seated causes of evil which result from the laws of nature and the passions of mankind."

One of the many reasons why Malthus is rarely recognised for the moralist he was, is the peculiar connotation that has attached itself to his name. "Malthusianism" has become a euphemism for those who advocate birth-control as one of the principal means of keeping the population within the resources of the food supply. Of all the travesties perpetrated by history, this is surely among the worst. For Malthus strenuously condemned all "violations of the marriage bed, and improper arts to conceal the consequences of irregular connection." Of Condorcet's suggestion, that the progress of reason and science would teach men to limit the number of their progeny without imposing upon

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them a corrupting austerity, Malthus could only comment that this was to remove the problem "in a manner which I profess not to understand," but which he surmised might refer either to "promiscuous concubinage, which would prevent breeding, or to something else as unnatural." In either case, he judged the proposal to be self-defeating, for it would destroy that virtue and purity of manners which Condorcet took to be the main distinction of an egalitarian society. (It would also—but this was a subsidiary argument—encourage sloth by removing a necessary stimulus to industry: "If it were possible for each married couple to limit by a wish the number of their children, there is certainly reason to fear that the indolence of the human race would be very greatly increased." That moral restraint would have the same effect did not apparently occur to him; or perhaps he had no great faith that the majority of men would ever exercise such restraint.)

One can sympathise with those who fail to recognise in Malthus the conventional moralist, ideologue, or publicist, and so feel obliged to create for him the title of sociologist. His addiction to facts and figures gave rise to the usual symptoms and stigmata of the sociologist. If he does not inspire faith as a sociologist, it is because these stigmata were no more than surface markings. What he was, in fact, was a moralist, a suitable opponent for Godwin and Condorcet. And it is as a moralist that he should be judged. If he is then found wanting, no amount of facts and figures, none of the appurtenances of the sociologist, will help him.

The Dancers

See how they move with strange smooth faces now.
Their feet find sympathy they never found
In words, their joy is bouncing on the ground.
The faster that they move the more they show
Soft and impassive features. It's as though

Thought were abandoned and the mind grown small,
And we sense peace however fast they move.
Some centre they have found, silent and still
Round which they dance. It looks like love until
The music stops, they separate and send
Shudders of some betrayal through us all.

Elizabeth Jennings

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Letter from BELGRADE

The Gentle Tyrant

Two hours after crossing the Yugoslav frontier, I was sunk in gloom worthy of Koestler or Dostoevsky. I wanted to die; I wanted to abolish the human race; and I wanted to turn back and never again set foot in Yugoslavia. Between the Italian frontier and the outskirts of Rijeka (formerly Fiume) I had seen 256 portraits of President Tito. Not one single motor car or lorry. Every second village was celebrating something. I passed under a large number of hastily (and poorly) constructed triumphal arches, bearing the legend: ZIVIO TITO. I could not fail to see how drab and grey universal poverty had made the country. In the main street of Rijeka loudspeakers were howling. Someone was delivering what sounded like a political harangue. After each sentence an unseen audience of 20,000 burst out shouting and applauding, though the people in the street did not seem to be particularly stirred or, indeed, to pay any attention whatever to the hullabaloo. Having made some enquiries, I was directed to a restaurant where I was served a poisonous meal by a murderous looking waiter. Nobody seemed to be leaving tips so neither did I, and consequently, on top of my increasing irritation, I felt mean and niggardly, too. After lunch I drove to one of the town's two petrol pumps (Rijeka has about 75,000 inhabitants) where I had to wait three-quarters of an hour for the return of a man who served me Yugopetrol. Compared with the fuel I was compelled to give my car, my own lunch seemed to be the acme of a *tour gastronomique*.

When, a week later, I passed through Rijeka once again, this time heading towards Trieste, I was genuinely sorry to leave. I am extremely fond of facile and superficial generalisations because, as a rule, I find them true. So I do not hesitate to say that the Serbs are one of the finest people in Europe; the Dalmatian coast enchants you with all the most beautiful scenery you can dream of; and, after all, amazing as it is, cars seem able to run even on Yugopetrol.

There were three basic questions I had asked myself before arriving in Yugoslavia and I have been asked the same questions many times since my return. (1) How Communist is Yugoslavia? (2) How far is the country a police state? (3) Is Tito popular?

I shall try to answer the third question first. Tito's popularity had faded to some extent before my arrival. "He's getting old, pompous, and unapproachable," was the usual comment, even among his old supporters. Then suddenly Tito produced a singularly impressive rabbit from his top-hat: the news of the coming Russian pilgrimage to Canossa, the Yugoslav capital.

Yugoslavia—and this is a characteristic and very human touch—was in no boastful, arrogant, or self-important mood. She was simply amused. I talked to quite a few people in responsible positions. They were all keen on displaying the "correct" attitude in public speeches, newspaper articles, at diplomatic receptions, etc. The Russians were to be treated as honoured and welcome guests but, at the same time, no offence must be given to the West. Behind closed doors, however, the Yugoslavs were smiling, indeed laughing aloud. Pravda's famous leading article on the past Russo-Yugoslav quarrels—the continuation of which, according to Pravda, would only serve the interests of the "enemies of peace"—was regarded as one of the best political jokes of post-war Europe. Yugoslavia made a determined, almost heroic, effort to keep a straight face.

Tito's ubiquitous portraits—in every room,

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public and private, restaurants, hotels, corridors, lifts, on posters, triumphal arches, and other specially-erected structures—remained irritating and ridiculous. But one had to remember that there had been a time of ideological and political struggle between Titoism and Cominformism when Stalin's equally ubiquitous portrait had to disappear and be replaced by Tito's; or else, where both leaders once figured, only Tito could remain now. That was part of the ideological fight. By now, much of the ideology has faded away—but the pictures are still there. And new ones are hung up—automatically, simply as an indispensable part of the furniture. Roman Emperors—Augustus and his successors—all became deified as a matter of course. Some of these Emperors insisted on their deification and rather liked the idea; others just could not avoid it. The modern dictator is also deified in a slightly streamlined manner and it is possible that he both approves and feels a little uncomfortable at one and the same time.

Is then Tito popular or not? Yes, on the whole he is. Naturally, there are many irreconcilable elements in the country, among whom the monarchists and the dispossessed classes are perhaps predominant. Many people have justified complaints, others cannot resign themselves to the disappearance of their own importance and influence—a feeling certainly human enough. But in the eyes of the masses, Tito is the old warrior, the hero of the war, the glorious and successful defender of the country's independence against both Germany and the Soviet Union, and also—most important—the head of the state. The Yugoslavs are used to kings. The monarch was a distant figure, beyond reproach and above criticism. He might be surrounded by bad advisers but he, himself, was good, noble, and a fond father of his people. Monarchical traditions are still strong enough to make a Communist president popular.

YUGOSLAVIA has a Communist government. The Yugoslav brand of Communism is not imperialistic and threatens no one with an aggressive peace-movement; it is further tempered by a great deal of humaneness. All this follows from the nature of the Serbs who are a curious, indeed, unique people. They used to be good democrats under a succession of dictatorships. Without being arrogant and self-assertive, they felt themselves to be anybody's equal. (Being under Turkish domination so long, they escaped, fortunately for them, the degrading influence of feudalism.) The Serbs are disinclined to persecute minorities, and even anti-Semitism has always been practically unknown among them (although not among the Croats). The Serbs are always ready to go out of their way to help anyone who needs help. Nevertheless, they can be cruel, they can kill and they can die without much fuss; and they can be outrageously unjust whenever their sense of justice is outraged.

Today, they regard themselves as good and faithful Communists but, apart from a tiny minority, they are no great ideologists. In the red-hot atmosphere after the break in 1948, ideological arguments and screams of "monolithic chauvinism" and "chauvinistic monolithism" filled the air. Eventually, however, the battle-cries over the right interpretation of the Creed died away and the Yugoslavs settled down to work. They were not worried about orthodoxy although they still like to regard themselves as the true disciples of Lenin. Before the schism, Yugoslavia used to be the most ruthless and least flexible among all the satellites. Today, while there is of course no sign of the withering away of the Yugoslav state, there is plenty of indication that Communist ideology is slowly withering away instead.

The most essential features of Soviet Communism do not exist in Yugoslavia. There is no "socialist rivalry" in production. That means that there are no workers' brigades, no norms, and consequently no overfulfilment of norms and plans. The trick of persuading workers to fulfil their norms and then to fix the new record achievements as the new norms is no longer practised. There used to be a Five Year Plan; this has never been officially abandoned but it has withered away along with the ideology. There are no production quotas for peasants: they produce what they want to and as much as they can or fancy. They are encouraged to sell their products to the state but quite a lot goes to private buyers at higher prices. All former régimes either waged war on, or tried to woo the peasants who now feel, quite rightly, that they have won a long drawn-out battle.

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They are better off than they have been for many decades and today they can afford to eat sugar and milk—an unheard of luxury in the past for most of them. They have more money to spend than before, but—being peasants—of course they do not spend it. The country is squeezing the town, unlike the situation in Russia where the peasant is victimised for the sake of the industrial worker. In Yugoslavia the standard of living of the peasants has risen, that of the town dwellers has sunk. Peasants were even allowed to leave the cooperatives, and leave them they did. Out of just under 7,000 people only 1,000 have remained members of the cooperatives; the rest have returned to individual farming. The extent of their holdings is, however, strictly limited to ten hectares (24·71 acres). In Yugoslavia the hated and despised *kulak*—the perpetual Russian scapegoat for every sort of trouble—has become a "builder of socialism." He is a little surprised at that and shrugs his shoulders but, in fact, he *is* building socialism (of a sort) because agricultural production has rocketed and is still going up—again unlike the Soviet Union and the satellite states where one agricultural crisis follows the other and where a kulak is still a kulak.

ALL forms of industrial enterprise were nationalised in Yugoslavia; but lately, while ideology has been slowly withering away, private enterprise has reappeared. More and more private shops are being opened or reopened and there is no discrimination against them.

A great deal of litigation goes on in Yugoslavia. Since "decentralisation" is one of the great slogans of the day, various nationalised enterprises have obtained a fair amount of autonomy. These nationalised enterprises are often engaged in pitched legal battles against one another in and out of the law-courts. When these disputes or law-suits are decided, the state puts money from one pocket into another and pays a private lawyer for the process. There are many law-suits also between private enterprises and nationalised firms and these are decided on their merits: the private firm has a good chance of winning its case against the state provided it has a good case. Lawyers, in fact, are numerous and rather prosperous.

Who else is well off in Yugoslavia? Artisans—carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, etc. —and those doctors and dentists who, after having done their duty towards the state, are allowed to have a private practice.

The ordinary town-dweller is very poor, indeed terrifyingly poor by Western standards. An unskilled or semi-skilled worker earns one pound fifteen shillings or two pounds per week, a medium-grade civil servant £2 10*s*. a week, and a man with £15 per month is considered quite well off. This is exceedingly little even by Yugoslav standards, although money goes considerably farther there than here. Housing conditions are very bad in towns and "one room for one family," I was repeatedly told, is, in fact, the general rule. Clothing is bad and expensive, but food is good and cheap; and the more mouths there are to be fed the more wages one gets. Schooling, too, is free. The state helps the sick and looks after the aged; pregnancy is no problem for a wife: she gets sufficient leave from her work to rest during her pregnancy and there are very good maternity hospitals—free of charge—and pre- and post-natal care is also satisfactory as are, on the whole, all the social services. All things considered, the one pound fifteen or two pounds per week is not the insult and disaster it would be in Britain; it only means a very poor existence and a hard struggle.

Yugoslavia, it ought to be remembered, has always been one of the poorest countries in Europe. But Yugoslav poverty is dignified and serene, not abject and miserable like Italian poverty. In Italy many people drive about in huge and expensive cars while many others go around begging a little cash for their mother's funeral (their mother is alive and kicking, of course, only this is regarded as an excellent trick which usually opens the purse of any American tourist). There are no beggars in Yugoslavia and in spite of their very low standards one feels that while there are many people in the country who are prepared to give, very few are ready to accept charity.

I much preferred Yugoslavia's dignified and defiant poverty to her few attempts at international luxury. The best hotel in Belgrade—although spotlessly clean, comfortable, and staffed by helpful and polite people —might just pass as a two-star hotel at Godalming; the capital's most alluring night-club would not be able to survive competition

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as a dance-hall in Reading. In Yugoslavia you cannot help thinking of the partisans. Partisan poverty is an inspiration and a challenge to all; partisan luxury is something hopelessly provincial.

WHATEVER else I may be, I do not think I can be called a physical coward. To qualify for this I should need a more vivid imagination. Nevertheless, I cannot deny that, crossing the Yugoslav frontier, I had an uncomfortable feeling, and there entered my mind at least the faint possibility of languishing in one of the less comfortable dungeons of Herzegovina. Such thoughts now seem rather ridiculous.

Political persecution of the familiar Communist kind has, for the time being at any rate, completely stopped in Yugoslavia. Police and Party terror reigned until 1950 or so; then it eased up considerably, and about three years ago it practically disappeared. The UDB —the Yugoslav equivalent of the NKVD— still exists and it probably still has long ears; but it no longer shows long arms.

Recantation, the public admission of one's heinous crimes and abject apology *à la Russe*, is out of fashion. There are no political trials at all, spectacular or otherwise. Speech is surprisingly free. I heard many remarks which would have been regarded as treasonable behind the Iron Curtain. The person who made them did not even look around furtively or openly to see if anyone had heard him. He did not care nor had he any reason to. One can listen to foreign radio stations and buy certain foreign newspapers at the stands in Belgrade, but English and American papers are not on sale. "We can't afford the foreign currency," I was told. "Good excuse for keeping up a censorship," I replied. But I was wrong. A few days later I saw a little notice in a Zagreb hotel advertising a newsagent who did sell English newspapers.

Speech may be free but the press is gagged. Not entirely though. Intellectuals are free to quarrel in the press about books, plays, films, paintings, and all modern tendencies of art and philosophy. The régime cannot possibly be so naïve as to imagine that the granting of this freedom is harmless and that quarrels about existentialism and surrealism (Zagreb is a bit behind Paris in time) are the innocent pastimes of a few cranks, devoid of political significance. The granting of intellectual freedom is not without certain possible, if not actual, dangers and it seems certain that the Yugoslavs do things with their eyes open—or at least one eye open, looking Westwards.

There are also a large number of people in Yugoslavia who are true followers of The Line in the Russian sense of the word. They try to maintain that no one criticises the government in the press because everybody agrees with its policy. This kind of stupid obstinacy is, however, rare. People in a more responsible position would say: "There is freedom of speech within limits. There is no freedom of the press yet. It may come. Anyway, freedom of speech is quite a considerable achievement."

Today there is no tension, no fear in the air. And people are allowed to travel abroad —which is another basic difference between a free country and a prison. Almost all these travellers return by their own free will. It is also true that a small number of people cross the frontiers illegally and ask for political asylum in Austria. These are a great embarrassment to the Austrians as well as to the Yugoslavs and the Americans—who run or finance the Austrian camps—and all concerned try to act as though these refugees did not exist.

BEFORE the war Yugoslavia was a beehive of nationalist factions, quarrels, and intrigues. Many who tried to understand the Macedonian question have gone mad. Today there is no longer any sign of unrest. The Serbs are extremely tolerant by disposition and the constitution, too, is very outspoken and strict on this point: to foster national, racial, or religious hatred is a very serious crime. All the six Republics constituting the Federation (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro) are allowed to use their own national language and are granted a fair amount of autonomy, or too much autonomy as some people say (they are permitted to regulate their own foreign trade relations, thus creating a complete muddle for the Federal Republic). The order to use these minority languages as the official languages of the component republics created some difficulties. The unhappy Macedonians had no proper national language—no literary language, at

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least. So the Serbs and Croats by dint of great effort created the President's Macedonian, as it ought to be called. They gave them a bit of grammar with the necessary amount of irregular verbs thrown in, and now the Macedonians are as happy as the rest.

Religion is not persecuted in Yugoslavia. The Orthodox and Mohammedan churches receive generous state grants from the Federal Government. The Roman Catholic Church receives no Federal grant but it is supported by the governments of Croatia and Montenegro and is helped to maintain its schools. The Catholic Church created a political problem and so did Cardinal Stepinac. Stepinac is no Mindszenty. There can be no doubt that the Cardinal was a supporter and admirer of Ante Pavelic, the despicable Croatian quisling. The Cardinal was largely responsible for the forcible conversion of Orthodox Serbs to the Catholic faith and the persecution of those who refused to abandon their religion. He was convicted by Tito's courts, but as the years went by Tito grew extremely tired of the fact that all his English and American visitors, when he tried to impress them with the achievements of the new Yugoslavia, said: "That's all very well, but what about Stepinac?" So the UDB released the Cardinal and he now lives at his home village of Urasic. If anyone tries to visit the village, he is stopped by gendarmes and gently persuaded to turn back. The UDB has hit on a very simple truth: it makes very little difference to them whether a prisoner is not let out of a place or whether no one else is let in to see him. At the same time, this makes a great difference to the prisoner.

The case of Milovan Djilas and Vladimir Dedijer has understandably received considerable attention in the West. It will be remembered that Djilas, one of the former leading personalities of the Yugoslav Communist Party, demanded in a newspaper interview given to *The Times* that the one-party system should be liquidated and the formation of other political parties—obviously opposition parties—should be permitted. All his former friends left him in the lurch, with the single exception of Dedijer, Tito's intimate friend and biographer.

Djilas and Dedijer were tried and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. The sentences were immediately suspended on condition that neither of them spoke to the foreign press. Today both men move about freely in Belgrade, although they are not exactly popular members of Belgrade society. But Djilas still receives his state pension and the shop windows of the whole country are still full of Dedijer's book, *Tito Speaks*. All this would rightly be regarded as scandalous in the West; nevertheless, one must remember that people who have been purged in Russia receive no pension from the state. Not even their widows and orphans.

YUGOSLAVIA is a small country, only slightly bigger than Britain. It has seventeen million inhabitants. Belgrade has a population of about 400,000; Zagreb, the second city, 300,000. Zagreb is still very much "K. and K."—"*Kaiserlich und Königlich*"—that is to say, it is a strange and provincial but charming relic of the late Austro-Hungarian Empire. Belgrade is not a beautiful city. It belongs to neither Central Europe nor the Balkans; neither East, nor West. It has an atmosphere though, which is endearing and captivating rather than exciting or stimulating.

The most memorable visual experience of the visitor is the almost unparalleled beauty of the countryside—and, first of all, the Dalmatian coast. Then one remembers the almost complete absence of traffic throughout the country. I was told that there are less than a hundred cars belonging to private individuals and I quite believe it. Few vehicles are used even by officials. In Belgrade, whole minutes may pass at certain times of the day before one single motor vehicle passes through Terazije, the main thoroughfare. A high percentage of the cars you do see in Belgrade belong to foreigners. In this land a traffic-jam is not a dreaded nuisance but a sweet, almost unattainable dream. It is a little pathetic to see all the proper international traffic signs in Belgrade, permitting or prohibiting parking, or forbidding even a momentary stop in a street where you are unlikely to see a motor vehicle for hours. There can be no more frustrating job in the whole world than being a traffic policeman in Belgrade or Zagreb. But traffic policemen are numerous—almost more numerous than cars—and they do their work with dignity and devotion. I always felt that I was doing a deserving man a good deed whenever I

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passed one. I noticed—or did I only imagine it?—that the traffic policemen always eyed me gratefully for passing through *their* street instead of their colleague's and competitor's. Occasionally the policemen have so little to do that they sink deep into thought or fall asleep on their little pedestals. In such cases you hoot at them. They wake up with a start, go through all the necessary elaborate gymnastics, and let you pass with an angry look which has mellowed into the usual gratitude by the time you leave the crossing.

Motoring between Belgrade and Nish, or Belgrade and Sarajevo, is not recommended even by the Yugoslav tourist agencies. ("If you plan to come to Yugoslavia, leave your car behind," said the encouraging advertisement in an official propaganda leaflet.) Avoid the Nish and Sarajevo routes unless you literally enjoy sticking in the mud or swallowing dust by the pound. But—in spite of all the rumours—the road between Trieste and Zagreb (via Rijeka) is excellent and the *autoput*—the motor road—between Zagreb and Belgrade is, without exaggeration, the best in the world. The land is as flat there as a table and there are no bends at all. On the American and German highways there is no traffic meeting you from the opposite direction. The Yugoslavs have improved on that. There is nothing going even in your own direction.

The distance between the two cities is 240 miles. Every sixty miles there is a roadhouse and a filling station. I covered the distance in three and a half hours, cruising at about seventy miles an hour. And I have a sluggish car and am a rather slow and careful driver. If you like going very fast, drive to Belgrade; if you like going very slowly, go on to Nish.

YUGOSLAVIA is a very cheap country by our standards. The best hotel room costs about fifteen shillings a day, a large plateful of black caviar ten shillings, and an enormous goose-liver £1—just to mention the most urgent necessities of life. Leather goods are admirable and ridiculously cheap but otherwise shopping is no easy task. On the last day of my stay I found myself left with 4,000 dinars (about £4) and, as one is not allowed to take much money out of the country, I tried to spend it in Rijeka. I had already bought my full supply of leather-goods, food-stuffs, and *slivovica*, the justly famous Yugoslav plum brandy. So I tried articles of clothing first for my wife and then for myself. I was offered a pair of ladies' slippers which looked like the late Stalin's dream of socialist realism. Some men's handkerchiefs looked as if they had been designed by a man expelled from the American Middle West because of his bad and loud taste. In the end, I bought a sufficient supply of socks to last me for the next eighty-four years, provided I can wear them at all. I also bought a shirt. I put it on once and then changed my mind about it and gave it to the gentleman who comes to wash my car every Sunday afternoon. One Sunday he took it; the next Sunday he brought it back. He looked hurt and pained.

In conclusion I should like to say a few words about the Slav muddle which is unlike any other muddle I have ever come across. It is not chaotic like German muddle; it doesn't have an underlying secret method and system as English muddle has; it is not a natural state of things like over-organised American muddle. Slav muddle is gentle, lovable, and utterly pointless. On my journey to Belgrade I stopped at one of the roadhouses mentioned. When I went in I was greeted to my great pleasure by my wife's favourite Hungarian folk-song, which a pleasant voice on the radio was singing in Hungarian. Thus inspired, I thought I would send my wife greetings. I walked up to the counter and asked the man for a picture postcard. He informed me that he had none and was saddened, as it was clearly his wish to please and oblige me. Any ordinary postcards? No—he shook his head —no ordinary postcards either. Suddenly a broad smile lit up his face. He had something to offer. His eyes shone and he declared proudly:

"But we have stamps."

George Mikes

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Letter from AMERICA

The American Dilemma Over China

WHEN the tide of Communism engulfed China in 1949 and the American-backed Nationalist Government lost its last foothold on the mainland, Americans began bludgeoning their minds with the nightmare that it was they who had lost China, they who had suffered the greatest defeat in their history. What had been the famous "open door" for fifty years had suddenly been slammed in their face. Cultural, religious, educational, and commercial ties were ruptured, the work of hundreds of missionaries of all kinds seemed to have been in vain. Millions of dollars invested in the spreading of Western culture, in creating goodwill for the United States, in building up the military power of the Kuomintang régime were lost. America, which had felt like a guardian towards China—her refusal to allow Japan to dominate China was one of the main reasons that led her into the last war—felt utterly rejected. China had been to Americans what India had been to the British—an Asian nation willing to absorb some of her cultural and political influences. India at least stayed within the British Commonwealth—to Britain that was more than a consolation. But China which, it was hoped, could be turned into a strong, democratic, and friendly partner of the West, abruptly cut herself off from the United States, and from the West in general.

Though it had been a slowly gathering storm of revolution, American public opinion was caught almost unawares. The sentimental novels of Pearl Buck, the smiling charms of Mme Chiang Kai-shek on the covers of large-circulation magazines, the rosy and misleading picture painted by American wartime propaganda, had made Americans expect a different finale to the liberation of China. It was a shattering blow to American self-confidence, American pride. After fifty years of benevolent guardianship the Chinese rebuffed America's political philosophy and instead adopted Russia's. It hurt, and every American felt it. And, as a consequence, it was for a long time impossible for the United States Government to introduce rational thought into the heated, often violent, discussion about the "loss of China."

The State Department, under Mr. Dean Acheson, issued a White Book in the hope that it would calm the troubled waters and inject reason and perspective into a debate which paralysed American policy in Asia. In his introduction the Secretary of State sought to explain the catastrophe as follows: "The unfortunate but inescapable fact is that the ominous result of the civil war in China was beyond the control of the Government of the United States. Nothing that this country did, or could have done within the reasonable limits of its capabilities, could have changed that result, nothing that was left undone by this country has contributed to it. It was the product of internal Chinese forces, forces which this country tried to influence but could not."

But Americans continued to blame themselves, their government's incompetence. All this fed the flames of a bitter debate within the American body politic, a debate based essentially on misconceptions. Soon the China controversy became mixed up in the election fever and the Republican party was quick to exploit it. But history and emotionalism and some pleasant fancies were not the only reasons for the psychological setback. Europeans easily forget, because the United States has committed herself so elaborately to the

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defence of Western Europe, that Americans feel much more insecure and exposed on their Pacific than on their Atlantic flank. The only attack that has ever threatened the American continent directly was the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour. In 1942, for instance, everybody on the West coast expected a Japanese attack on that coast, and the reported appearances of Japanese airplanes and submarines close to California reinforced those fears. The implications of Pearl Harbour linger on in the American mind and remain as ominous to Americans as Dunkirk is to the British or Sedan to the French. Americans also remember that in the Pacific they had to fight virtually alone, and that later, in the Korean war, they had to carry "nine-tenths" of the burden. All this has conditioned men such as Admiral Radford, who spent all of World War II in the Pacific, Mr. John Foster Dulles, whose crowning achievement before he became Secretary of State was the Japanese Peace Treaty, and Senator Knowland, whose home state is California, to adopt a *mare nostrum* attitude in the Pacific. The American Government, although it has concluded such alliances as SEATO and ANZUS, wants to maintain a free hand, particularly militarily, in the Pacific. It is primarily to assure herself of the *moral* support of her allies that the United States entered these alliances.

But apart from military and geographical reasons, there are also domestic political reasons why the United States prefers to play a lone hand in the Pacific, and pursues what at least appears to be a militant approach to the Far East. American isolationism, so far as it has existed in the past and still exists, has always been related to Europe. There are large and influential European language groups in this country—such as the German, Scandinavian, Dutch, Central and Eastern Europeans—some of which have been the mainsprings of isolationism. Until the overall threat of Russian imperialism made itself felt after World War II, these groups, and particularly the Germans and Italians, campaigned against intervention in Europe, which to them meant intervention against their own blood relations.

Such inhibitions have never obstructed American policy-making in Asia. Admittedly, there are Chinese and Japanese language groups in the United States, but they have never wielded political influence as groups. In fact, the most hardened isolationists as regards intervention in Europe have been frequently the most vociferous interventionists in Asia, and, for some time, they were—it is doubtful whether they still are—in the majority. They have made it, and are still making it difficult for the American Government to see their way through to a new China policy.

In the earlier phase the policy problem was, as the American public and some policy makers saw it, how to prevent the Communists from consolidating their position in China. But the fallacies of this approach soon became obvious. However close United States bases were to the mainland, they could not replace the advantages of a common border with China such as Russia enjoys. And unless the United States wanted to engage in a preventive war, it could not strangle effectively the development of Communist China. So as time passed and the Communist régime consolidated its hold on the mainland, the American policy problem grew into how to prevent Communist China from consolidating her position in Asia.

The notion that the United States could interfere with the consolidation of the Communist régime captured the imagination of the American public because most people underrated the historic significance of the revolution and overrated the popular support Chiang Kai-shek still enjoyed in China. Mr. Dean Acheson, the Secretary of State at that time, had no illusions. He was convinced that the Nationalists had lost all effective support on the mainland and that not even direct American intervention in the struggle could save Chiang Kai-shek. He was also convinced that those who disagreed with this view were not doing so because they really believed that Nationalist China could be saved, but because they thought it was politically profitable to blame the fall of the Nationalists on the Truman Administration. Nevertheless he disagreed with the British Government about the wisdom of recognising the Communist régime. He thought it was premature, even though the Communists had gained relatively firm control over the whole of China. His problem at the time was still how to make the facts of the situation clear to the American people, and how to reconcile the

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policies and prejudices of the United States. In this dilemma, Mr. Acheson made a speech declaring that the United States would "let the dust settle in China." It became a haunting phrase. Americans did not like it. The record shows that patience and moderation ultimately triumph in the making of American foreign policy, but to expect Americans to accept publicly a policy of "wait and see," as Mr. Acheson did when he proposed "letting the dust settle in China," was to misjudge the American temperament.

Anyone who has ever watched a baseball game in the United States must have been surprised to see how the players invariably protest the umpire's decision before they accept his verdict. It would almost be un-American not to protest. The same happens in the arena of foreign politics. And the protests to Acheson's negative policy became loud indeed. They became so deafening that he lost all freedom of decision.

EVENTS in China meanwhile further aroused the sense of danger among Americans. Mao Tse-tung concluded the Sino-Soviet Treaty and the Peking Government illegally confiscated American consular property and mistreated American consular officials. The fires of hatred were astir among Americans. It incensed them that the Government was powerless to do anything drastic in the face of these humiliations. A desire for revenge grew, and it was not easy for the Government to make the public understand that any warlike action would not only entail grave risks but also exorbitant costs in men and material.

When the Communists launched their reckless attack on South Korea and the Government decided to intervene, the world, including the American public, were surprised at President Truman's resoluteness. The frustrations of the past few months had suddenly found an unexpected release by the enemy's miscalculation. But instead of the expected swift police action the Korean intervention became a long-drawn-out war, which engendered new frustrations. And when the "Chinese volunteers" entered the battle it was not surprising that the clamour for a direct attack against the Communist mainland gained new momentum; yet, in spite of the emotional turmoil, the Truman Administration, rightly or wrongly, kept the war limited to Korea. As we now know, the restrictions which President Truman imposed on American military strategy in Korea—restrictions which necessitated the removal of the defiant General MacArthur—the preponderance of Chinese manpower, and the difficulties of the mountainous terrain, led to a "stalemated war." This generated further disillusionment among Americans who, for the first time in their military history, had failed to score a victory. To the Chinese this was a tremendous boost of prestige. Peking, never at a loss for boastful words as regards its own successes, claimed victory and some Republican Party spokesmen, never at a loss for derogatory words to minimise Democratic Party achievements, deplored an American defeat. Neither was true, but it all further aggravated the American dilemma over China.

The worst expectations were confirmed when the Communists, flushed with success, brimming over with self-confidence, turned their attention to Indo-China, where another ripening plum was ready for them to be plucked.

Indo-China had not been an American responsibility but, as is the case with almost all trouble spots in the world, is an American concern. The French Government, in fact, decidedly rejected any suggestions which would have caused the internationalisation of their war in Indo-China. They maintained that, given American aid, they would be able to cope with it alone. However, Indo-China had not been basically a military problem. By the time it had become one, it was already lost to the French. Ever since 1946, when they negotiated with Ho Chi Minh in Paris, they miscalculated every political step they took, or didn't take, in the area. And when from 1950 on the power and influence of Communist China grew, and in her shadow that of Ho Chi Minh, their position became untenable. Finally, when the French Government appealed to the United States to throw her weight into the scales at Dien Bien Phu, French rule in Indo-China had reached what could be called literally a point of no return. Though the French Government only asked the United States for an air strike against the besiegers around Dien Bien Phu, the American Joint Chiefs of Staff believed that only a massive intervention of American power, not only at Dien Bien Phu, but in Tonking

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and against China proper, could prevent Ho Chi Minh's triumph.

As the situation built up to a climax, but before the French Government sent their SOS to Washington, the Eisenhower Administration was deeply rent over whether or not to intervene. For a time it seemed as if Mr. John Foster Dulles, Admiral Arthur Radford, and Vice-President Richard Nixon, a very strong trio, felt that the time had come to make a stand on the Asian mainland and to intimidate if not to discipline the Chinese Communists. The public, not sure of the significance of either Dien Bien Phu or Indo-China, was confused and apathetic. The Korean war with all its sacrifice was still too open a wound in their memory. But when suddenly several Administration spokesmen began exhorting the country that new sacrifices may be expected of it, and even hinted ominously that American troops may be necessary to stem the Communist tide in Indo-China, people began to get aroused. These high-level exhortations did not spark the kind of enthusiasm or bellicosity they meant to engender, but it was perhaps the last time that American hostility towards the Chinese Communists was still violent enough to support an intervention. The fever, however, only lasted a few days. The tide in favour of intervention was brief and it receded as suddenly as it had been built up.

THE first signs, still obscure to the public, that American China policy was undergoing a change came to light when the State Department suddenly announced the completion of a Mutual Defence Treaty with Nationalist China. The clue to this change, however, was not in the body of the Treaty, but discreetly hinted at in a formal exchange of letters between Mr. John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of State, and Mr. Yeh, the Chinese Foreign Minister, which implied that from now on Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek could not undertake any offensive moves without prior approval of the United States. But the implications of the groping change of United States' China policy became obvious only in February 1955 when the State Department asked the United Nations to arrange a cease-fire in the Formosa Strait, for this was the first public admission that the United States was now aiming at a "Two China" policy. It was a logical consequence of the decision not to intervene at Dien Bien Phu which, I believe, was the turning point of American policy in Asia. It was then that the inner struggle between those American policy makers who advocated intervention on the Asian mainland, and those who opposed it, was decided. Admittedly, this struggle still continues, and is likely to continue for some time to come. It flared up again over the decision as to whether the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu should be defended, but, in the perspective of history, Dien Bien Phu will probably remain the crucial date.

When ten months later the United States Government was again debating whether to intervene against Communist China, this time in support of the Nationalist defenders on Quemoy and Matsu, the White House and members of Congress were flooded with letters of protest from all over the country. No one is quite sure what prompted these protests. Was it that the public simply did not think it worth taking the risks of war over two "postage-size" islands they had never heard about before? Was it Mr. Dulles' hint that the United States would have to resort to the use of tactical atomic weapons to defend those islands effectively? Or was it a more basic change of attitude towards Communist China? Senator Knowland, aroused by the Administration's hesitations, sounded grave warnings. "If a warlike nation, dominated by the philosophy of Communist violence, gains the heavy balance of power, anyone can imagine the consequences to the rest of the world. . . . The world must face up to this grim threat now. . . ." But he got little attention.

American public opinion is volatile, and at times can be aroused overnight, but there was no doubt that a decisive change had taken place since the day Mr. Acheson asked for time to let the dust settle in China. Ever since President Eisenhower fulfilled his election pledge and concluded an armistice in Korea, the emotional heat which the simple mention of Communist China engendered among the public and in Congress had cooled, and ever since the armistice in Korea and Indo-China, the Eisenhower Administration had been trying to develop a more realistic policy towards China whose aim is some *modus vivendi* resembling the peaceable non-recognition which the United States maintained with Russia

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until the early thirties; it did not exclude trade and cultural relations. But even the most optimistic are aware that there will be a painful voyage from the offices of the policy planning staffs to the wilder shores of life before such a *modus vivendi* will become possible. Still, policy changes towards Peking began to be discussed in public.

WHAT had happened? Was it simply due to the passage of all-healing time? One thing was certain, a moderate mood had generally set in. The public's confidence in President Eisenhower's leadership was certainly an important contributing factor, also the silent recognition of the inexorable march of events which spelled the growing strength of the Chinese Communists and the gradual withering away of the Nationalist China. It had now become possible to discuss in public the problem of Communist China's admission to the United Nations. The sudden announcement in Peking that some American fliers had been sentenced as spies created a short uproar, but although the Communists waited for almost six months before they released the first batch, in spite of repeated interventions by the United Nations' Secretary, General Dag Hammarskjoeld, and British and Indian statesmen, the few attempts by Senator Knowland and Senator McCarthy to arouse and exploit the public's anger over the treatment of these fliers failed; the Administration and Americans in general preferred to wait, and they waited patiently.

Again, when it became obvious that the Administration began exploring ways and means to enable it to abandon the offshore islands, Senator Knowland objected violently. He began travelling around the country making impassioned speeches in his sincere and grimly dedicated way, warning that a military stand against Asian Communism could not be much further delayed, that the United States must not surrender another inch of territory to the Chinese Communists. A year ago when the atmosphere was still charged with McCarthyism, the sparks of Senator Knowland's accusations against the Administration would have caused a conflagration. But now he failed to light up emotion. The public mood is for peace and against interventions; people are also too interested in their peacetime prosperity. And the Government, somewhat to their surprise, realised suddenly that the coercive powers of the group headed by Senator Knowland, which for so long had usurped the conduct of American China policy from the Executive, had evaporated, and that it represented only a minority in Congress, in the Republican party, among the public, and a diminishing minority at that. Of course Senator Knowland, who sees himself as the 1955 American counterpart of Winston Churchill of 1938, can be expected to go on shouting, like Cato, that Carthage must be destroyed. He sincerely believes he may be vindicated, if not in 1956 then by 1960, which is another year of Presidential elections.

The question Americans are asking now is not whether to help Chiang Kai-shek reconquer the mainland, but whether it is better to go on ignoring the existence of the new China, or whether to negotiate and trade with her. President Eisenhower has not yet given his answer, but when he said that the United States is willing to engage in direct negotiations with Peking, he at least indicated that he was aiming at an accommodation with Communist China. To everybody's surprise the public accepted his declaration calmly. A few angry protests came out of Senator Knowland's corner, but that was all. The lack of any reaction was due to a combination of confidence in President Eisenhower's good sense and an acceptance of the inevitable. And this in spite of the continuing Chinese threat to "liberate" Formosa, their arrogance and recklessness and brutality. One almost gains the impression that Peking applied these methods in the same way as a psychiatrist administers shock therapy to a particularly disturbed patient. The danger is, as with all therapy, that it can be overdone.

O. H. Brandon

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Comment

"The Bomb That Didn't Go Off"

DENIS HEALEY's thoughtful and stimulating article in the July ENCOUNTER deals with what he calls the question posed by Korea and Dien Bien Phu: Will any power in fact use its thermonuclear weapons except in the last extremity when its own survival is unequivocally at stake? To that question I would reply: No, certainly not. But I don't think it was posed by Korea and Dien Bien Phu. It has been my business to think about atomic and thermonuclear warfare perhaps longer and more carefully than most people, and it has never occurred to me that anyone should be so utterly irresponsible as to launch thermonuclear war except in the very last resort, when the survival of freedom is unequivocally at stake.

That raises in its turn two other questions. First, what do we imagine that this Great Deterrent will in fact deter? The most that the advocates of the deterrent policy have ever claimed for it is that it will deter a potential aggressor from undertaking total war as an instrument of policy—as Hitler did in 1939—or from embarking on a course of international action which obviously involves a serious risk of total war—as the Austrian Government did in 1914. That is all. But goodness knows it is important enough—it is in fact one of the most revolutionary developments in human history. And I see no reason to imagine that it will be invalidated when we reach what Sir Winston called "saturation point." Denis Healey himself rightly says that scientific development is tending to "consolidate the predicament in which, though each side can annihilate the other's cities, neither can hope to destroy the other's power of retaliating in kind." As long as that remains true, I believe we have seen the end of total war as we have known it in our generation.

I agree that China is less susceptible than America (or Russia) to thermonuclear attack. But—though I do not rate the present Government of China as a world menace comparable to Soviet Communism—I do not think Mr. Chou En-lai's attitude of sweet reasonableness at Bandung was entirely unrelated to the existence of the U.S. Strategic Air Command. As for Russia—can anyone seriously believe that the men in the Kremlin, who perpetrated one of the blackest acts of treachery in the world's history in the betrayal of Bor's Army in Warsaw, and who have been a curse on the world ever since, have suddenly become less impossible to deal with for any reason other than the Western policy of strength, based on the hydrogen bomb? In other words, the deterrent is working in the sphere—the only sphere—in which anyone is entitled to expect it to work.

BUT to complain because it has not worked to prevent minor local aggressions in Asia is to expect far more of it than anyone is entitled to expect. In a moment of aberration, H.M.G. in their Statement on Defence 1954 said that the growth of the deterrent would make adventures like Korea by the Communist World less likely. On the contrary; it will, if anything, make them more likely. Mr. Acheson said last year that local wars like Korea are the only wars we can afford these days; that is equally true of the Communist half of the world. It is possible that, when contemplating some local aggression, they may hold their hands at the eleventh hour for fear of it blowing up into a global holocaust; who knows?—that may have happened in the Formosa Strait. But it would be quite unsafe to assume that we shall not see further small wars on the Korea, or more likely the more difficult Indo-China, model. In those circumstances, "massive retaliatory power" makes little sense. Even Mr. Dulles has said we can't deal with every local war by blowing it up into World War III. An unpleasant truth, which some of us have yet to learn, is that in these sort of wars there is no substitute for tough, well-trained, professional troops on the ground—naturally with air cover and support. And to redress the inevitable adverse balance of numbers, they must be free to use the tactical atomic weapon which, as Denis Healey rightly points out, favours the defence rather than the aggressor. Do not let us worry unduly about that spilling over into the whole-hog thermonuclear war. There is no reason why it should. People who voice that objection too often assume that the enemy will be just waiting for an excuse to plunge into global war. Nonsense; he will be just as anxious to avoid it as we—and probably more so.

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The second question I referred to above is: What is the last resort, the last extremity when our survival would be unequivocally at stake? I say it is if and when it becomes quite clear that we are in for total war with Russia. I don't think China is in the same category at all; a local war in Asia might develop into a situation in which the survival of some of our SEATO partners would be at stake, and no one can say that the time might not arrive when the grim decision has to be made in that context. But I believe that unlikely. In Europe, however, the issue would pretty soon be quite clear. Naturally I don't suggest we should launch the hydrogen-bomb offensive the moment some major frontier incident occurs—which is still not inconceivable even in Europe. That is the primary reason why we must have what are now rather oddly called "conventional" forces in Germany—something between the hydrogen bomb and the policeman—to deal with a situation like Hitler's occupation of the Rhineland. But the moment it became clear (and I think it would soon become pretty clear) that the Kremlin had decided on the desperate gamble of total war—then I see no alternative to the thermonuclear arbitrament. Denis Healey agrees we must retain that capacity "as the ultimate weapon if other methods failed to halt the Red Army."

That leads on to his own elaboration of the question quoted at the beginning of this comment: Can the West afford to put itself in the position where its only effective reaction to a major military advance by Communism means self-destruction? To that I am inclined to reply—can it afford not to? It would obviously suit the Soviets admirably to have what Gruenther has called the "war of flesh"; I cannot see that we have any practical prospect whatever of meeting them successfully on that level—even with the help of the tactical atomic weapon. Denis Healey gives some good reasons later in his article; and I really do not believe that the tactical atomic weapon could decisively redress our inevitable inferiority in conventional weapons to an enemy who is entirely regardless of the cost in human life. It is all very well to talk about making mobile formations "comparatively independent of land supply," but we cannot ignore the economics of defence, and the cost of air supply on the scale envisaged by some soldiers would be astronomical. And I have seen enough of attempts at "international specialisation" to reduce the cost of conventional armaments to be a bit sceptical about it.

So, while I agree that the thermonuclear deterrent is of only limited application, I believe it to be of decisive importance. And I do not think we can maintain more strength "in every mode of warfare" than we are now trying to do. Finally, the world has surely now become so small that the U.S. is hardly likely to regard her interests as "only indirectly involved" by a Soviet conquest of Europe, whether or not American soldiers were still stationed on the Continent.

Marshal of the Royal Air Force
Sir John Slessor

Yeovil
Somerset

Fei Hsiao-tung

In his romantic review of *China's Gentry* (Encounter, January 1955) Karl A. Wittfogel states that "Mao ordered Fei to concentrate his researches on urban reconstruction, and to stop busying himself with the gentry, which the Communists understood better than he. Rumour has it so. In any case, Fei was given a place on various government boards and committees. But he was kept out of the villages, which in the past he had studied so intensely."

With such a nice ear for rumour, it is not surprising that Wittfogel is deaf to the truth, which many British and other scholars have known for three years. It is that Fei Hsiao-tung is the President of the Central Institute of Nationalities at Peking, and that his extensive field-studies are, by the very nature of his duties, rural and not urban. Mr. Wittfogel is therefore right in saying that Fei's "position is high," but not in assuming that "his voice is low." Apart from the fact that high positions and low voices are not the usual expectancy, in China or anywhere else, Fei's voice is in great demand everywhere, including the most remote areas of China. I have seen dozens of published photographs of him speaking to large audiences in various Minority territories.

Mr. Wittfogel also says that "Fei stopped writing to his friends immediately after the Communists seized power; and his statements since that time do not necessarily express his innermost feelings. But having known him personally, I consider it more than likely that in the depths of his heart he comprehends fully the tragedy which has overwhelmed him and his countrymen."

Again, the truth is different. Fei, who was never a good correspondent anyway, has not written to his *American* acquaintances largely because letters from China can have very unpleasant consequences for their recipients in Encounter's America. It is just as well for Fei that he felt this way; for, if he has more "friends" like Wittfogel in the United States, there is no knowing what they could conjure

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up by Wittfogelish interpretations of a few letters. It is a very curious token of regard that Wittfogel should publish statements that, according to his own fantasy-pictures of China, could only lead Fei to prison or to the executioner. Fortunately, they are not true; and Fei is much too highly respected and personally integrated to be unduly disturbed by poorly aimed dirt thrown by peculiarly affectionate friends.

I should add that my personal knowledge of Fei is evidently more extensive than Wittfogel's, since we have been close friends for twenty years and had several conversations in Peking during October–November 1955. On one of these occasions I went to tea at his home, and was compelled by his charming wife and himself to stay to pot-luck dinner, so that it can at least be said that we talked as two good friends will in such circumstances.

He commiserated with me good-humouredly because I was still "writing so felicitously about race problems," while he at last had become an "anthropologist in action," in an exhilarating atmosphere where "cooperative work with minorities" has already produced such outstanding results; and I agreed, from what I had seen of the new position of the minorities, that I envied him—as I sincerely do. As compensatory boasting I reminded him that in the days before the war we had *both* been excited by the successes of the Chinese Red Army and its policies, to which he replied laughingly that if I had had more good sense I should, like himself, also have arranged to have been born in China.

This is scarcely the table talk of a man overwhelmed by a deep sense of personal and social tragedy. His only complaint, roused by my asking about his "recent book," which he had not even seen, was that a work bearing his name should have been printed without his approval. It is still more disturbing that a collection of elderly minor articles should be published, without the author's consent and against his interests.

CEDRIC DOVER

London, W.6

I GATHER you are already printing a more fully and recently informed letter than I could send about the Chinese sociologist Fei Hsiao-tung, whose sincerity was smeared by Mr. Wittfogel in a recent number of ENCOUNTER. What might still need pointing out is that Fei, as head of the University for National Minorities in Peking, represents one of those parts of the work of the present Government which a historically conscious Chinese intellectual is least of all likely to feel ashamed of. The Chinese have a bad record as colonists in the past, not that they were at all racially prejudiced, but that a tribesman could not expect much unless he adopted Chinese culture. The present sturdy drive to encourage minority cultures, and make a display of them in Peking every year to prove that they are not forgotten, is a conscious attempt to correct the errors of the past. That is why I feel the casual assertion that Fei must be feeling ashamed of himself is a particularly bad guess, as well as being rather nasty.

WILLIAM EMPSON

The University, Sheffield

[*Mr. Wittfogel replies:*

Neither Mr. Dover nor Mr. Empson has contested my statement that, for a long period prior to 1949, Fei's views differed fundamentally from Marxist-Leninist dogma. Anyone who recognises this fact will understand that Dr. Redfield, in presenting the English version of Fei's articles on the gentry (which Fei himself had helped to prepare), was not disclosing any dark secrets to the Communists. And he should also be willing to concede that my assumption regarding Fei's state of mind now is reasonable and legitimate. Many have speculated regarding the innermost thoughts of literary and political figures in Russia who, never having been Marxists or Communists, have nevertheless conformed to the Communist order. In a comparable setting, I suggested that a Fei who preserved any of his earlier views and values would be deeply disturbed by the developments that, under Mao's régime, are occurring today in the Chinese villages. I have elsewhere given more details regarding these developments, which involve forced collectivisation, famine, flight from the farms, and, in cases of overt defiance, brutal persecution, slave labour, and death.

My critics, having seen Fei since 1949, take great satisfaction in asserting that Fei is today a very happy man. Perhaps they are right. Perhaps Fei's moral fibre is weaker than I, on the basis of a rather long friendship, believe. Perhaps today Fei is indeed an enthusiastic supporter of policies that formerly were alien to his way of thinking. This, however, does not entitle them to minimise the changes in Fei's professional life after 1949. The fact remains that under the Communist Government he is no longer occupied professionally with the Chinese peasantry. My critics admit this indirectly by pointing to his present work with tribal minorities. True, some minority groups live in villages. But my review leaves no doubt about the kind of villages I was discussing. The difference is crucial. After his talk with Mao, Fei was no longer permitted to deal with the Chinese peasants, who were so well known to him and who numerically, politically, and eco-

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nomically are incomparably more important than the non-Chinese tribes.

The objection to my comment that, while Fei's position was high, his voice was low, equally misses the mark. Again, taken in context, my statement is unmistakably clear. When speaking of Fei's "voice," I was not thinking of the number of words that Fei is allowed to utter. A dialectical parrot can be both noisy and garrulous. What I had in mind was Fei's freedom to discuss independently and critically, as he had done formerly, such problems as the character of China's traditional society, land reform, centralisation of agriculture and industry, and the inter-relation between power, wealth, and property. Any literate person knows —or ought to know—that in Communist China free discussion of such matters is impossible.

KARL A. WITTFOGEL

Chinese History Project
Columbia University
New York]

Professor Redfield has also supplied us with the following comment:

Mr. Morin of our Press at the University of Chicago has sent me a copy of Mr. Cedric Dover's comment on Professor Wittfogel's review in ENCOUNTER of *China's Gentry* by Fei Hsiao-tung. My wife and I read with great interest what Mr. Dover wrote about his visit with Fei. As Fei's friends we are glad to hear, though indirectly, that he is getting on so well. We do not think that Mr. Wittfogel's representations can be read as an authoritative statement of Fei's present situation any more than we think that Mr. Dover is in a position to state what were Fei's intentions in 1948 with regard to the publication of *China's Gentry*.

On this last point I am in a position to make a statement. I do so now in view of what Mr. Dover writes in the last paragraph of his letter wherein he reports that Fei complained to him that the book was published without his consent. I make no statement as to Fei's present views about which I know very little. But I can assure you, as I have assured the University of Chicago Press, that throughout the preparation of the draft of the book in Peiping, in the autumn of 1948, Fei talked frequently of having the book published in America, plainly declared his intention that it be so published, and hurried the work in order that we might take the manuscript with us when we left Peiping in December. His intentions at that time were recorded in general terms in the inscription he wrote and signed in a copy of the Chinese publication of the same papers which he was then engaged in translating and modifying as he worked with my wife. I have this book in front of me, and I copy the inscription on the fly-leaf:

To Greta,

I hope very much that a part of this book could be translated as the second step in our joint work in sociology. Nothing is more encouraging to me than that work to explore the mystery of Chinese Society can be continuously carried on even at the time of this disturbance.

(signed) Hsiao-Tung
21/11, 1948

ROBERT REDFIELD

Chicago, Illinois

The Bad Old Style

SIR—Though amused by Mr. Hilary Corke's article, "The Bad Old Style," in the June number of ENCOUNTER, I could not prevent myself from feeling somewhat indignant at his treatment of two of the contributors to "Oxford Poetry 1954."

In the first place, he quotes some lines from a poem by Mr. George MacBeth with the introductory comment, "The same poet provides plenty of examples of the 'Empsonian' movement at its most characteristic and most absurd," without bothering to reveal that this very piece is intended as a candidly humorous comment on another poem printed in the same volume.

Secondly, he contrives to misrepresent the so-called "Empsonian" poets in general by his facetious description of their method. This, from my observation, contains a large element of "grotesquerie." The philosophical terms, the classical references, and the mildly improper ones, are present as part of a parody of the stuffy academism against which the poet is in revolt. They are part of Mr. Empson's salutory legacy of frivolity, and should not be taken more seriously than they are meant.

Where Mr. Corke might most usefully have commented, he remained silent. For example, he said nothing about the way Mr. Jonathan Price and Mr. MacBeth, among others, have taken up the exploitation of specialist vocabularies. The Neo-Georgianism which Mr. Corke admires is well enough in its way, but any poet who writes in its convention has to abandon all claim to a great many English words in current use. Perhaps it is a good thing for literature that there exist young poets brave enough to wish to use the full possibilities of the language.

EDWARD LUCIE-SMITH

Royal Air Force
Pewsey, Wilts

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BOOKS

An Enigmatic Giant

BETWEEN contemporary judgement of a man and the judgement of history there often occurs a phase when uninformed public opinion instinctively anticipates definite ideas. That is the Bismarck situation at the moment. Contemporary judgement of Bismarck was diverse and bewildered, ranging from Queen Victoria's open disgust to the adoration of his admirers in Germany and abroad. Today he figures in popular ideas as a "bad thing," a great and brutal man of genius who ruined Germany by setting her on the path of aggression. Final agreement with or refutation of this judgement is likely to be deferred for some time yet, not only because Germany remains an emotional subject, but because Bismarck's complexity can make him obscure to those who study him most. Great as he was, he lacked the simplicity of greatness.

Mr. A. J. P. Taylor, of Magdalen College, Oxford, the author of entrancing essays on Hohenzollern Germany, now appears as the latest biographer of the founder of the German Empire. He has evidently long pondered and studied his subject, and the resultant book* is a worthy addition to the literature of Bismarck, all the more needed because the British contribution to that literature is smaller than it should be. It is a book which should hasten the formation of a lasting opinion.

As in his memorable essay on the same subject, Mr. Taylor is never unaware that he is dealing with one of the great paradoxes of all time. The Iron Chancellor stands before us in his brilliant Prussian uniform, his steel helmet and big boots and spurs, this man who only spent a year in the army (after trying to malinger his way out of it); who created the greatest military state of the modern world and was the last German civilian of the second Reich to keep soldiers in their place; who despised Prussian bureaucrats and formed an Empire whose strength was in the size, efficiency, and discipline of its bureaucracy, and whose weakness was in the inflexibility and lack of mental breadth that goes with excessive civil service. The modern belief that the state is total master of the individual received its greatest impetus from a man who had never read Hegel and had but the flimsiest notions of what that philosopher had written about. Many people see in Wagner the bard of the Germany which, under Bismarck's political direction, conquered in 1871. Bismarck said Wagner was a monkey.

In his work for the Prussian royal house we see the contradiction at the root of Bismarck's character in a formidably clear light. He raised the Hohenzollerns to dizzy heights, but he was no royalist. He was a courtier all his life but never learned respect. He needed King William and the King needed him, and they spent their lives in a titanic if usually disguised quarrel. Their predicament received perfect expression at the proclamation of the King as Kaiser in January 1871 amid the conquered glories of Versailles. William was not Imperially-minded, but if he had to rule an Empire he wanted to be called "Emperor of Germany," a territorial title indicating something better than presidency. Bismarck wanted just presidency (so long as he was around), and for that reason insisted on the alternative title "German Emperor." At the very last moment William tried a bold move. He cornered the Grand Duke of Baden and told him to lead the cheering for the "Emperor of

* *Bismarck*. By A. J. P. TAYLOR. Hamish Hamilton. 18s.

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Germany." Unfortunately Bismarck had noticed the King's staircase intrigue and firmly commanded the Grand Duke to lead the cheers for "Kaiser Wilhelm." Baden obediently did so. This was too much for Kaiser Wilhelm altogether, and he cut Bismarck in front of the whole assembly as soon as the proclamation was over! But the mutual need persisted in spite of such things, and it was so great that, on Bismarck's side, it called forth something like affection and admiration in his cold, contemptuous heart. This did not prevent him talking to Disraeli in 1878 about "the horrible conduct of my King." The Iron Chancellor sobbed distractedly when he announced William's death to the Reichstag, but as Mr. Taylor shrewdly observes, the grief was as much for his own weakened political position as for the departed "*greiser Kaiser.*" No harsher fate could have overtaken this bully of royal personages than his expulsion from office by the greatest goose ever to wear a crown.

AMONG the contradictions, the frequent tears shed by this most virile of men are perhaps the least perplexing thing about him. He was indeed a great crier, and in his memoirs there are several records of weepings in which he was sometimes joined by William. They had one especially big cry together in a railway train. Behaviour of this sort is not likely to strike people who have studied Oliver Cromwell, as out of character, and, as Mr. Taylor insists, Cromwell is the closest parallel to Bismarck in European records. It is stranger to learn that this fierce and gluttonous giant had a voice of such gentleness and sweetness that it could be mistaken for a woman's, and yet more strange to remember that the supreme virtue of this ruthless and emotional warmonger who never forgave an injury was moderation in victory. In this he resembled the otherwise very different Richelieu. He was a natural revolutionary who was forced by circumstances into conservatism. He was never reconciled to the restrictions of fate and necessity.

It is a custom nowadays for the biographer to legislate about his subject as though he has been favoured with a long and frank session on the psychiatrist's couch. Mr. Taylor is far above such tricks and he only offers one profoundly interesting hint in psychoanalytical

DENT

A Prospect of the Sea

Stories and Essays by

Dylan Thomas

The contents, none of which has previously been published in book form in this country except stories from *The Map of Love*, now out of print, range from stories written in the thirties, including the title-story, 'A Prospect of the Sea,' which belongs to the time when the author first settled at Laugharne by the sea, to the essay 'A Story' which appeared in *The Listener* a few months before his death. 10s. 6d.

Shoddy Kingdom

a novel by

Derrick Boothroyd

Nelson Shaw, the hero of this novel, is a creation on the grand scale in the tradition of Arnold Bennett. From his earliest youth he makes the acquisition of 'brass' his sole aim in life. Only when his obsession brings him and those who love him face to face with utter ruin does it dawn on him that there may be other values in life. The story is set in the Heavy Woollen Industry of the West Riding—the 'shoddy kingdom' which is also the scene of the author's humorous book and film, *Value for Money*. 12s. 6d.

The Field of Roses

a novel by

Phyllis Hastings

This story reveals fearlessly, sometimes cruelly, but always with the redeeming touch of compassion and humour, the heart of a woman in love. Rose meets a seemingly decorous young Frenchman, a waiter at a fashionable Bournemouth hotel, but her love-marriage to him proves a bitter disillusionment, and later her life at his sordid little hotel in the North of France ends in domestic disaster. The scene shifts to the earthy South, to Provence, where the developments lead to a dramatic climax which brings Rose at last within sight of inner peace and self-fulfilment. 12s. 6d.

COMING AUGUST 18TH

Commando Climber

Mike Banks, Captain R.M.

FOREWORD BY SIR JOHN HUNT, C.B.E., D.S.O.

The ardours and joys of climbing and exploration, described from an entirely new angle by Mike Banks, whose experience of Commando training, in Cornwall, Malta and Cyprus, and as a member of the famous British North Greenland Expedition, throws new light on the thoughts and actions of men in hardship, danger and loneliness. 16 pages of photographs. 18s.

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terms to elucidate the great enigma. He says:

> It is a psychological commonplace for a son to feel affection for his mother and to wish his father out of the way. The results are more interesting and profound when a son, who takes after his mother, dislikes her character and standards of value. He will seek to turn himself into the father with whom he has little in common, and he may well end up neurotic or a genius. Bismarck was both. He was the clever, sophisticated son of a clever, sophisticated mother, masquerading all his life as his heavy, earthy father.

Since this book is short for its long theme, there are inevitable gaps in the story. Most of these are unimportant, but not all. I think Mr. Taylor ought to have given more space to William I's successor, "*der weiser Kaiser*." Was he so wise? His reason for joining the Imperial party—that his father had to walk behind the Russian Emperor at the Paris Exhibition of 1867, suggests that under a noble presence and a respectable disposition Frederick was nothing much. Mr. Taylor tells us too little about a characteristic Bismarck intrigue, the appointment of Prince Alexander of Battenburg to be Prince of Bulgaria. Bismarck made a miscalculation here, since he cast a man of spirit for the rôle of a man of straw, and this put on him the painful duty (which caused him no pain) of betraying the man of spirit. It is a minor episode, but the events following Alexander's attempt to marry Princess Victoria of Hohenzollern throw much light on the character of the Empress Frederick, and explain Bismarck's determination that that tragic, attractive, and exasperating woman should never have influence in German affairs.

Mr. Taylor also makes no mention of the Arnim business in which the dark side of Bismarck's nature appeared at its most odious. He persecuted Count von Arnim for ambassadorial insubordination (he got him condemned to penal servitude), and in so doing he exposed a trusty servant, Holstein, as an informer. This was bad for Holstein and perhaps explains his later insane aversion to all things Bismarckian, a potent cause of the state of things which led to World War I. A smaller and more doubtful point which is not touched upon is Bismarck's mistaken idea of Edward VII's character and career. Did not Bismarck teach William II to see in his genial Uncle Bertie an arch-Machiavel, and was it not a cruel irony that the Imperial pupil could absorb the errors and none of the wisdom of the only great man who served him? A larger question which ought certainly to receive more prominence than Mr. Taylor gives it is Bismarck's conduct of the *Kulturkampf* in Poland where, for the first time in modern history, a highly civilised Western State indulged in mass-expulsion on racial grounds. We British must be careful not to throw stones, having encouraged and condoned that crime on two subsequent occasions, but we can say that Bismarck opened an appalling chapter of modern politics. There is no need to forgive him.

THE gaps may indicate that Mr. Taylor takes a somewhat favourable, benefit-of-the-doubt view of Bismarck, but the bias is very slight. What impresses a reader of this book is not bias but detached understanding illuminated by imagination. Mr. Taylor is sometimes reproached for Puckishness. I think that often this means nothing more abominable than readability, though it must be confessed that he is sometimes glibber than he ought to be, as for example when he argues that Bismarck, in spite of his warmongering, had a "deep sense of moral responsibility." I am sure that Mr. Taylor could defend the paradox, but I am also sure that he ought not to raise vast questions and then dismiss them in one sentence. But for every such passage there are many more which show a rare grasp and judgement. Here is one:

> The great Napoleon had had to fight many wars in order to impose his Continental System. Bismarck had done it by magic. There lay the weakness. The differences between the Great Powers had not been settled. They were conjured away, and they reappeared as soon as Bismarck's back was turned. Content himself, he had nothing to give the peoples and rulers of Europe except lassitude. . . . He should have lived in the despairing twentieth century, not in an age when men still believed in a Progress without limits.

There are great scenes in profusion to be found in Bismarck's long and strange life. I find one of the most dramatic in the last visit of William II to the old statesman, in 1898. During lunch Bismarck maintained a grave demeanour, but William insisted on triviality

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and gaiety. He made clumsy efforts to shine as a royal butterfly in the style of Uncle Bertie, and he is supposed to have interrupted Bismarck by saying: "Why is a cigar like a mother-in-law?" At length the old man obtained attention. He recalled at some length Napoleon III's difficulties and his dependence on his Praetorians, and then suddenly turning to the young Emperor, "Your Majesty," he said, "so long as you have your present corps of officers you can do what you like; but if it should ever be otherwise with you, then things will be very different." There was an awkward silence.

When the goose had left, Bismarck prophesied that disaster would come in 1914 or thereabouts. Frankenstein had recognised a monster in this noisy and paltry creature.

Christopher Sykes

"TO KNOW AND YET NOT TO FEAR REALITY"

Most of these essays were written as introductions to books, and all of them were written for occasions which were not of my own devising. The occasions were quite discrete from one another, the subjects are in some ways diverse, and I wrote the essays with no thought of achieving an interconnection among them. In each case my intention was only to serve the given subject, to say what made a particular book or author interesting and valuable to us. Yet inevitably an interconnection among the essays does exist—apart, I mean, from whatever coherence is to be found in their writer's notions of what constitutes the interesting and valuable, of what constitutes "us." The essays deal with episodes of the literature of the last century and a half, and they all, in one way or another, take account of the idea that preoccupies this literature and is central to it, and makes its principle and unity—the idea of the self.

I HAVE quoted in full the first paragraph of Professor Trilling's introduction to his new volume of eight essays,* not only because it describes the contents of the book, but also because it speaks so excellently both in defence and in condemnation of the essays that follow it. The essays, in fact, have little unity, and such as they have derives from the author's own general standpoint towards life and literature. That attitude is only partially and imperfectly represented by the "idea of self" as the dominant concept of post-18th century literature, which he develops in the rest of the introduction. The thesis by which he attempts to unify these unrelated pieces is characteristically wide and abstract. "The modern self," he says, and by this he means the self that has emerged from the late 18th century onwards, "is characterised by certain powers of indignant perception which, turned upon the unconscious portion of culture, have made it accessible to conscious thought." And in language hardly less difficult, he explains that this is a description of the writers' hostility which has extended beyond society in its purely institutional and formal aspect to embrace unconscious assumptions, unformulated valuations, habits, manners, and superstitions. This is clearly true. There is and has been for the last 150 years a growing and deepening criticism of the very texture and style of our civilisation. Literary expression of this criticism has inevitably made more explicit the nature of this texture and style, which Professor Trilling more conveniently than aptly has called society's "culture."

In stating that from 1780 or thereabouts writers have been more deeply preoccupied with the antagonism of the self to the unformulated penumbra of society which he calls "culture," Professor Trilling is not perhaps guilty of expounding a truism; the analysis has not perhaps been so exactly made before; yet it is hardly a surprising one. Above all, it is a very wide and abstract thesis which extends far beyond the position of the writer. To apply it to individual authors, and more still to individual books, would hardly seem likely to illuminate more than a very

* *The Opposing Self*. By LIONEL TRILLING. Secker and Warburg. 16s.

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general outline. So, in fact, in these eight essays, it proves to be. This need not, however, detain us; for the thesis, clearly an afterthought when the essays were brought together, plays only a very minor role.

It is, nevertheless, interesting that Professor Trilling, in searching for an unity, should have devised so wide, so abstract an argument, for it is these qualities which above all mark, and, I think, mar his literary criticism. On first thought, it would seem likely that introductions to individual books would suffer in reprinting from their too particular nature, their too close relation to the text which they were intended to introduce. Such a presumption might apply to many literary critics, but not to Professor Trilling. His abstracting tendency can be relied upon to speak above and beyond any text. No one would wish to dispute the great depth which has been given to literary criticism by harnessing to its services other branches of learning. Semantics, metaphysics, theology, psychology, moral philosophy, all have done service to rescue the discussion of literature from the aimless ambling of belle lettrism, the profitless track of historical descent, the wild flights of biographical hunches; the danger is now that the new and more powerful steeds will run away with literature all together.

THE reaction from the old methods came with the demand for more close relation to the text. At the same time, it is the peculiar glory of the modern school of critics that they should have asserted so firmly the integral connection between literature and life, the deadness of literary criticism that does not take account of other branches of human thought and activity. It is also peculiar and perhaps peculiarly unfortunate that this same school should be so largely drawn from the Universities. Professor Trilling's humanity speaks loudly for itself; it speaks with a stentorious voice above that of many of the leaders of the New Criticism; even so, the most vital of critics needs constant injections of humanity. Paradoxically, I think that these injections will come best from an almost pedantic attachment to text, for the text gives us the writer and it is from the writer's humanity that the critics must be fed. It is sad, then, in these essays to find how seldom the author—so penetrating a student of literature, even, on occasion, so exciting a discoverer—draws upon text for his vitality, how often he dilutes his humanity with draughts of philosophy, of psychology, of any other widely abstracting discipline of mind that may swell the original seed of his literary penetration into a shapeless, unappetising fruit.

The full flavour of this fruit may be found in Professor Trilling's style and it is very unpalatable. The opening passage of his introduction, which I have quoted, may once again serve as an example. It labours after philosophical exactitude; it eschews ornament; yet it demands abstraction where none is needed—"of what constitutes *the interesting* and the *valuable*, of what constitutes '*us*' " —and it abounds in repetition: "preoccupies this literature, and is central to it, and makes its principle and unity." It has like most serious modern American criticism a touch of the rhetorical, a ring of the sermon, but rhetoric that is carefully dessicated, a sermon that is self-consciously dry as dust. His style has not so much of the philosophical jargon, the Germanic compounds and syntax that make most of the American New Criticism so distasteful, though it is not utterly without them; but it is needlessly difficult, at once dry and verbose. Though ornament or figure are forbidden, yet there is on occasion a distastefully affected ring in the choice of words—"the strengthening of these bonds by the acts and *attitudes* of Charity is a great and *charming* duty." It is, in short, a style of writing that never assists and often seriously hinders the reading of these excellent essays.

FOR excellent and illuminating they are, despite all that has to be said in general criticism of them; and, above all, stimulating —both to contradiction and to further exploration along the same exciting tracks. Like most occasional pieces, they are of unequal merit; but, above all, the most successful are those whose themes lie closest to the author's own view of life. The formulation, the elucidation of his own philosophy always preoccupies Professor Trilling. When his theme lies within the orbit of this preoccupation, he feels free to explore at will, to go along with his subject—with Keats or Wordsworth, with James's hero Basil Ransom, or with Flaubert's saintly copy clerks—to an exposition which is complete and wonderfully illuminating. It is then that the subordination of

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the latter to philosophical exploration seems least damaging, seems indeed hardly to damage at all. On occasion, however, his contact with his theme is only partial or tangential and then, too often, a good essay, a promising line of thought is damaged by being cramped into the mould. So it is, I think, with the essays on *Little Dorrit* and *Mansfield Park*. Finally, there are those themes which seem hardly to touch his preoccupations at all and then he is often content with conclusions that are hardly more than banal. Such, I think, is the essay on *Anna Karenina*.

It may perhaps be best cursorily to examine some aspects of this failure before attempting to outline what seems to me to be Professor Trilling's view of life as illustrated in the best of these essays.

In the essay on *Anna Karenina*, he seems almost content to tell us that Tolstoy's greatness lies in "the trueness to life" of his work. No reader of *Anna Karenina* can have failed to feel this. It is here surely that an analysis of the *mise en scène* of the novel, of the juxtaposition of events, of the suddenness by which the reader's expectations are deceived and he is led on to accept a new expectation as inevitable, of such technical brilliance, would have been enlightening. For it is by these means that, in part at any rate, Tolstoy convinces us. Professor Trilling warns us that Tolstoy's truth is not necessarily "truer" than Dostoevsky's; but he says nothing of the strange contrast in which each diminishes and elevates man's soul in entirely different aspects. Tolstoy's truth, in fact, hardly touches the author's, and so he has little to say about him.

The essay on *Little Dorrit* is more illuminating. He sees clearly Dickens' complex treatment of self-pity and injured gentility—the self-mutilation that the social will imposes upon such characters as Fanny Dorrit and Harry Gowan, on Miss Wade and Mrs. Clennam. He rightly regards *Little Dorrit* herself as the holy child, the negation of the social will by which alone we are freed from the prison house that dominates the novel. To make *Little Dorrit* only a story of negation of the social will, however, leads him to reduce Mr. Dorrit to a minor role, mitigate the vileness of Mr. Merdle, and elevate the importance of Blandois. A single reading of the novel will show that this is absurd—the author's preoccupation has forced a living work of art into a convenient box.

Something of the same sort occurs in the essay on *Mansfield Park*. His analysis of this novel up to a point is quite masterly, though I believe that much of what he argues about Fanny Price would have been unnecessary had he compared her with Ann Eliot and not with Elizabeth Bennet. However, he sees almost to the core of Jane Austen's moral æsthetic, to the contrast between Fanny's commitment to duty and Mary Crawford's commitment to impersonation, to insincerity. One of his preoccupations, however, is a defence of passive, vegetable virtue—it is the theme he so brilliantly expounds in the Wordsworth essay—and so he is led away from the penetrating study of the significance of the house in Mansfield Park for Fanny, into an elaborate attempt to exalt Lady Bertram as a half-ironic exposition of the virtues of vegetable existence. Once again, no reading of the novel, of Edmund's decent observance of his mother's position—decent

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but no more—can possibly admit such an absurdity.

WHAT, then, are the aspects of life which so strongly predispose Professor Trilling that they can so make or mar his literary criticism? He stands, it seems, with the heroes of the modern literary critical world—with Yeats and Lawrence and Eliot—up to a point. His agreement with them is well expressed in a remark of Basil Ransom, the hero of James's *The Bostonians*. "The whole generation is womanised," says Ransom, "the masculine tone is passing out of the world, it's a feminine, a nervous, chattering, canting age, an age of hollow phrases and false delicacy and exaggerated solicitudes and coddled sensibilities, which, if we don't soon look out, will usher in the reign of mediocrity, of the feeblest and flattest and the most pretentious that has even been. The masculine character, the ability to dare and endure, to know and yet not to fear reality, to look the world in the face and take it for what it is—a very queer and partly very base mixture —this is what I want to preserve, or rather, as I may say, recover."

It is this theme that Trilling so admires in *The Bostonians* and the essay, as a result, is quite brilliant. He finds this same manly courage and acceptance in Keats's letters, and with it another quality which he demands of life, Keats's famous "Negative Capability," the refusal to shut out life by going out for dogmatic truth. It is here that he parts company with his Anglo-Catholic allies. Indeed, it is somewhat in the teeth of Mr. Eliot that he further pursues this Negative Capability aspect of virtue in the vegetable, almost mineral existence of Wordsworth's old men, in the goodness, the acceptance of life of the Idiot Boy—the virtue of simply being. In a brilliant side hit at Mr. Eliot, he shows how little it is possible for the author of the *Cocktail Party* to conceive a *living* virtue that is not violent and extreme, how dead is the virtue of those who must accept the simple round in this play. Finally in "Bouvard and Pécuchet," he pursues another sort of sanctity, the sanctity of these active-minded, simple, *loving* men, the sanctity of Leopold Bloom.

These four essays, then, are a recompense and more for all the faults of the book. They are quite brilliant in themselves, but they have a courage rare in these days to accept the reaction against liberal sloppiness, to demand a manly, courageous acceptance of a "partly very base" reality, and yet to refuse the violence, the sin obsession, the dogmatism, and the aristocratic arrogance that usually accompany this reaction and insist on the virtues of passivity, acceptance, negative capability, and love.

Angus Wilson

AT LAST—THE TRUTH!

"AT LAST—*the truth* . . ." is a dear enemy among blurbs, if only because one knows that it can never be justified. "At last —the truth about the Brighton Pavilion" might, or might not, be a fair claim provided the book in question confined itself to surveyor's reports, transcripts of accounts, and inventories of contents. But "At last—the truth about Herzegovina," with its pendants "The only authoritative eye-witness account" and "What life is really like in Herzegovina today," is a very different matter: it assumes, what mercifully does not (at any rate as yet) exist, a standardised observer, an invariable reaction, a universal point of view. What life is really like in Herzegovina for Mr. Joker Playfair, ace correspondent, is (I dare say) not awfully like what it would be for me or you; and is (I dare say) awfully like what it is for Mr. Joker Playfair in Hemel Hempstead. It is the sky that changes, not the I.

Still less can the truth, "at last" or otherwise, be found within the confines of the novel, which is concerned essentially with the individual and unique interpretation of the

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fact, never with the fact itself. This is illustrated amusingly in the case of two recent books, to each of which the publisher might (though in either case he has manfully refrained) have prefixed the announcement: "At last—the truth about the Battle of Crete." Number one, *The Cretan Runner*,* is an eyewitness account of the battle, and of the subsequent years of Resistance, by a Cretan shepherd blessed with the delightful name of George Psychoundakis, employed as guide and go-between by the English undercover agents in the island; the book is translated and impeccably introduced by one of the best known of these, Mr. Patrick Leigh Fermor. Number two is the second instalment of Mr. Evelyn Waugh's case-history of a love affair with the Army, *Officers and Gentlemen*.†

The wildest flights of imagination (whatever they may be) would find it difficult to conceive of two more disparate observers of a single scene that Messrs. Psychoundakis and Waugh. The former is as Arcadian and unsophisticated as may be. He is not, of course, a "typical Cretan peasant," for it is precisely his literacy and his authorship that set him apart; he is presumably something of a joke and a wonder to his fellow villagers: nevertheless *The Cretan Runner* enables the reader to get deeper below the surface of that antique and hierarchical landscape than one could ever have suspected possible. Cretan Resistance will always remain one of the more evocative theatres of the late war: the spiky uplands between skeletal ranges, the sudden lush explosion of maize-patch or olive-grove, the bagpiping goatherds beneath the arbutus, are all creatures of the Arcadia under the mind from which our pastoral reveries steal up, although the modern Arcadia may be riddled with consumption and vendetta; and the hostilities in Crete were scaled down to man-size, to something that can be held conveniently in the mind, where the outcome of each struggle depended, not upon logistics and the slide-rule general, but upon the personal bravery of the village butcher and the low cunning of his auntie up the street. *The Cretan Runner* brings all this to life not by any literary sleight-of-hand—for, as might be expected, the author is innocent of airs and graces—but by its plain objective telling of the tale. M. Psychoundakis speaks of what he saw and what he thought of it, and it is up to the reader to fill in this penny-plain outline with the twopenny colours of his own imagination; at the same time the author succeeds by this simplicity and directness in conveying a decidedly charming sense of his own personality, perhaps most evidently so when, deserting his island for a little while, he describes his visit to Egypt—a curiously unspoiled and simple reflection of the sensations of an up-country boy face to face for the first time with the fleshpots of the Nile.

THE mutual incomprehension of allies is always entertaining. Here is George Psychoundakis on the English Sabotage Officer:

> He was a most peculiar man. He went about in military uniform and refused to wear Cretan clothes. He also had pyjamas, a wash basin, and a thousand and two mysterious objects. He uprooted specimens of every kind of plant he encountered, and laid them—still with the earth clinging to the roots—on the table. Then he would open his books and study them from their leaves to their roots. . . . The Englishmen, who teased him because of all this, told us he was a very brave man and that he had been wounded in the head in some battle, and, it seemed, never quite got over it.

Here, on the other hand, is the unfortunate experience of Evelyn Waugh's Major Hound:

> Fido awoke in this Arcadian vale to find standing near him and gazing fiercely down a figure culled straight from some ferocious folk-tale. His bearing was patriarchal, his costume, to Fido's eye, phantasmagoric—a goat-skin jacket, a crimson sash stuck full of antique weapons, trousers in the style of Abdul the Damned, leather puttees, bare feet. He carried a crooked staff.
>
> "Good morning," said Fido. . . .
>
> The Cretan made no answer. Instead he reached forward with his crosier, deftly hooked Fido's pack from beside him and drew it away.
>
> "Here. I say. What d'you think you are doing?"
>
> The old man removed and examined Fido's possessions, transferring them one by one to his own pouch. . . . Fido drew his pistol.

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* *The Cretan Runner*. By GEORGE PSYCHOUNDAKIS. Murray. 18s.

† *Officers and Gentlemen*. By EVELYN WAUGH. Chapman and Hall. 12s. 6d.

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"Give those back or I'll shoot," he cried wildly.

The Cretan studied the weapon with renewed interest, nodded gravely and stepped forward.

"Stop," cried Fido. "I'll shoot."

But his finger lay damp and limp on the trigger. The old man leant forward. Fido made no movement. The horny hand touched his and gently loosened his grip on the butt. The old man studied the pistol for a moment, nodding, then tucked it beside his daggers in the red sash. He turned and silently, surely, climbed away up the hillside.

Fido wept.

Only the second half of *Officers and Gentlemen* is concerned with Crete. The beginning shows us the hero, Guy Crouchback, reinstated after his African débâcle and transferred to Commando training in the Hebrides. A new friend, Ivor Claire, takes the place of the late and ever to be lamented Apthorpe—a friendship just as damaging as the former, though it would not be for me to reveal in what way. When "Hookforce" at last finds its devious way from the Hebrides to Crete, a new and extremely sinister character emerges, Corporal-Major Ludovic, the arty ranker with the ruthlessness of ten—indeed one of the themes of *Officers and Gentlemen* is that in a military shambles like Crete it isn't the bold Sandhurst bow-wows who tend to survive but the hitherto despised Bohemian types, who suddenly display an inspired care for their own skins that leaves the others standing. Meanwhile on the home front we gratefully observe the innocence of Crouchback senior protecting him like shining armour, and less gratefully the infamous Trimmer scuttling from glory to glory. The regulation dying fall shows Guy square-bashing at the Halberdier depôt once more.

It is more or less *de rigueur* amongst the hungrier British intellectuals to derogate Evelyn Waugh. It is urged that he has "gone to seed," that his recent novels show a great falling-off from his earlier work, that they are spoilt by his intermittent seriousness and above all by his Catholicism. Nothing, it seems to me, could be further from the truth. I doubt if any contemporary writer's work shows such firm and logical development, from first book to last book, as his. The early works are a very young man's brilliant *jeux d'esprit*; but the writer, like the man, has to grow up, and if his readers are unwilling to follow him into maturity, that is their loss not his. As for the "Catholicism," to call Mr. Waugh a "Catholic writer" in the same tone of voice as one would call Mr. Graham Greene one, is the merest abuse of criticism; Mr. Waugh's beliefs sometimes provide him with material and colouring for his characterisation, but never at any moment does he allow them to artificially direct the plot. The fact is, that these recent novels form a new genre in English literature, the mixture as never before; and people dislike changes. Nor is it a mixture likely to appeal to the narrower mind: the Puritan critic shudders at the cynical-farcical passages and the amoralist critic at the Papist-gentlemanly ones. The wider public however (of whom I am one) recognise Mr. Waugh as a writer who is, in his chosen field, incomparable. No one can create an unforgettable world with such an economy of line and gesture. *Officers and Gentlemen* contains nothing so terribly and painfully funny as the death of Apthorpe in *Men at Arms*; it is a quieter, more melancholy, more sinister affair: but it fully maintains the very high level of its predecessor. Apparently this concludes the Crouchback saga. I am sorry: it tells the truth—at last!—about, at any rate, my kind of War.

I WANT to recommend briefly three new translations. Eça de Queiroz, the 19th century Portuguese novelist, was (I suppose) known to very few people in this country until quite recently. Then we were suddenly treated to *The Relic* and *Cousin Bazilio*, and now to *The City and the Mountains** in a brilliant translation by Roy Campbell. The hero, a hereditary Portuguese prince "scintillating with billions," is obsessed with the ideas of Civilisation and The City; his house at 202 Champs-Elysées is crammed with every contemporary labour-saver, each of them causing in the end more labour than it saves, culminating in an hilarious incident when the Grand Duc's Carpathian fish gets stuck in the thermostatic plate-elevator. At length the Prince, bored silly by Paris, leaves for his Portuguese estates, where adventures of quite a different kind await him. De Queiroz is a refreshing writer, sane and decided; his plots, like those of his contemporaries, are big, simple, and foolproof. Where

* *The City and the Mountains*. By EÇA DE QUEIROZ. Reinhardt. 12s. 6d.

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he differs particularly from his English counterparts is in his worldliness: he is no less "moral" in his way than Trollope or George Eliot, but we should search *Barchester Towers* or *Middlemarch* in vain for a passage like the following:

"Diana de Lorge? She's a *cocotte* . . . in a big way."

"Yours?"

"No, not mine. I only own a piece of her. . . . A city like Paris needs courtesans of the greatest pomp and splendour. Just to keep a *cocotte* (in the enormous expense of Parisian life) in her clothes, her diamonds, her horses, her footmen, her theatre boxes, her festivities, her palace, her publicity, and her general insolence, requires several large fortunes, so we have to form a syndicate. . . . There are seven of us, all from the Club. I pay my share . . . but that's purely out of Civic Loyalty, to endow this City with a Monumental Cocotte."

*The Film of Memory** represents (by one of those unfathomable translator's licences) *La Volupté d'Etre* of Maurice Druon. La Sanziani, one-time famous courtesan, is reliving her life backwards in the third-rate Rome hotel to which she has finally drifted. Carmela, a pretty little chambermaid, herself on the threshold of a similar career, is caught up in this hallucinatory existence. This is a work of coarse and insensitive texture, compounded of clichés both of character and language, but it is redeemed by powerful construction, by the author's sureness and sincerity. "I can't admit," says La Sanziani, "I'll never admit, this great betrayal by the body, this betrayal by time, of a heart that does not change. There are moments when I feel, when I *know*, that I'm eighteen, and all I believe I have lived is only a dream which I have woven of my future, the summing-up of all my dreams, of all my nights, and that nothing has existed yet." This theme, that might well have defeated a more elegant intellect, is worked out with surprising firmness by the ungainly but determined pen of M. Druon.

Lastly *Bonjour Tristesse*,† the novel by a nineteen-year-old girl that has sold a quarter of a million copies on the other side of the Channel. Mlle Sagan's heroine, Cécile, is deeply attached to her widowed and womanising father, and finds their rather casual and ramshackle life together entirely to her taste. Into this disorderly paradise comes Anne, a woman of culture and charm, determined to marry the father and rescue the daughter from her environment. Little Cécile is having none of this and successfully breaks up the *liaison*.

This book has got the critics worried. Some condemn it as a best-seller and say no more: but not all best-sellers have been negligible, and *Bonjour Tristesse* seems to me, within its limits, extraordinarily good. Some condemn it as a fluke and record their convictions that the authoress will never be able to produce its equal: which is entirely beside the point, since we are concerned with the book and not with the writer—though one might add in parenthesis that proneness to flukes is part of the skill of the game. Some condemn it as a more or less unsubtle attack on law, order, sanitation, universal education, etc.—probably

* *The Film of Memory*. By MAURICE DRUON. Hart-Davis. 10s. 6d.

† *Bonjour Tristesse*. By FRANCOISE SAGAN. Murray. 7s. 6d.

LAURIE LEE

A Rose for Winter

TRAVELS IN ANDALUSIA

'A magnificent book, outstanding even in a field where the competition is so oppressively brilliant' *New Statesman*

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it is this aspect of the book that has ensured it its enormous sales: but such critics do wrong to present its theme as the choice between order and disorder, with a subversive option for the latter. It is the choice rather between disorder and false order, between a living jungle through which the cunning beast may thread some kind of a way, and the chromium and plastika gallery where all is dead. "I realised," says Cécile of her attempt to read Bergson at Anne's instigation, "I realised that I was more gifted for kissing a young man in the sunshine than for taking a degree." As a jaded University lecturer at the end of an academic year, I feel that quite a number of my students might be placed in that category; and yet others (alas!) in the category of those who are gifted for neither. Hooray then for Cécile, who at least knows where she stands!

Hilary Corke

A PENGUIN MYTHOLOGY

It is not surprising that Mr. Andrew Rothstein, a well-known Communist, should be anxious to write an apologia for Russian policy since the war. Nor can he be blamed for trying to get it the best possible circulation. What is peculiar is that Penguin Books should offer it to the world as an impartial survey of the problems of peaceful coexistence.* "He discusses this idea by putting forward clearly and convincingly the arguments for both sides," reads the advertisement. Communists consider the *Daily Worker* and *Pravda* to be objective. Do the promoters of Penguin Books share this belief? It can be maintained, since Western democrats are on one side and Communists on the other in the cold war, that it is helpful to hear Communist arguments in Britain. But there can be no possible justification for claiming that such arguments add up to a detached analysis of the situation. It may be that Western democratic views on coexistence are too familiar to be worth repeating in a Penguin book. There might have been something to learn from, say, an Indian liberal on the topic. But a more worthless publishing project than that of purveying the hack clichés of a tame British Communist cannot be imagined. If Penguin Books had secured Mr. Molotov as their author at least the result would have had a temporary authority—until the Kremlin decided on another change of policy. But when a British Communist writes a book he can have no inkling of what the line is going to be by the time that it appears. "Our line's been changed again," is the mournful refrain of the Party comrade in a satirical song of the modern Wobblies. Poor Mr. Rothstein must appreciate the poignancy of that now.

In his preface dated February 1955 he writes:

> Since the main text which follows was completed, in the late autumn of 1954, there has been a deplorable increase of international tension.
>
> It may prove to be temporary. That is, some new means may be found of preventing the rearmament of Germany, by agreement between the three Western Powers and the Soviet Union . . . . Or the tension may be protracted. The mounting popular campaign in West Germany, France, and Great Britain—for immediate negotiations with the U.S.S.R. rather than rearmament of Germany—may not prove strong enough. . . . In that event the immediate prospects for peaceful coexistence will obviously be less promising than they were last year.

If Mr. Molotov had written the book he would have known as long ago as last autumn that the violent Communist tirades against the London and Paris agreements were bluff and that the signing of them would be followed by new Soviet overtures and not by increased hostility. But Mr. Rothstein was in the simple-minded position of believing the party line.

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* *Peaceful Coexistence.* By Andrew Rothstein. Penguin Books. 2s. 0d.

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Another basic error which must be making Mr. Rothstein a little glum today is his long attack on Mr. Christopher Mayhew for writing an article in the *Observer* last October in which he described his attempts to persuade the Russian leaders in Moscow of the folly of relying on such obvious Communist-front organisations as the Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R. and the British Soviet Friendship Society. The unfortunate Mr. Rothstein thought that his leaders would not be impressed and that it would be safe to bang Mr. Mayhew about. But, although Mr. Mayhew's article in the *Observer* did not convince Mr. Rothstein, it persuaded those responsible for making Communist policy. Today Mr. Mayhew's non-Communist Soviet Relations Committee is officially approved by the British Government and by the Russian Embassy. I suspect that now it would be just as easy to get a visa to go to Russia with the help of that organisation as it ever was with the aid of the British Soviet Friendship Society. Mr. Rothstein is again behind the new times.

For Mr. Rothstein the Communist Government in Czechoslovakia was established by democratic processes; the "peoples' democracies" really are democracies; the Russians have been struggling for peace in an unkind world. All the turgid nonsense of ten years of the *Daily Worker* and the *Labour Monthly* is spread out anew. Mr. Rothstein cannot even bring himself to believe that the Russians have large armed forces. He tries to discredit official British estimates of their size by confusing the figure for the strength of the Soviet Army with that for all three services, by referring to a non-existent speech of January 26th, 1951, by Mr. Attlee (on that day the House of Commons discussed the Deserted Wives Bill and Mr. Attlee was silent), and by mixing up anti-aircraft with front-line divisions. Mr. Rothstein has such an unusual talent for jumbling the facts that it is not in the least odd that he always prefers the Moscow version to anyone else's.

Nowhere in this book, which puts forward "clearly and convincingly the arguments for both sides," can I find a criticism of Russian or Chinese Communist actions since the war. That the absurdity of publishing this book as a contribution to understanding and towards the relief of international tension did not occur to Penguin Books is amazing. Communists and fellow travellers will applaud it. Non-Communists will be irritated and tempted to think that if it really represents the Russian approach to coexistence then the attempt to achieve it permanently will be hopeless. However, it only reflects the second-hand vapourings of an earnest student of *Pravda* who, although he tried hard, could not get them into print before they became out of date. Fortunately for the peace of the world it may be assumed that the rulers of Russia are more realistic and intelligent, and have no greater respect for the British Communist Party than the British people have.

Woodrow Wyatt

Other Books

Poet and Painter, being the correspondence between Gordon Bottomley and Paul Nash —1910–1946. O.U.P. 30s.

Meaning and Symbol. By GEORGE WINGFIELD DIGBY. Faber. 30s.

"I HAVE tried to paint trees as tho they were human beings," wrote Paul Nash in one of his boyishly enthusiastic letters to Gordon Bottomley at the outset of their lifelong correspondence, and he went on, "I sincerely love and worship trees and know they are people and wonderfully beautiful people—much more lovely than the majority of people one meets." This was in 1912. Thirty years later, in his essay called "The Monster Field," he was still describing the same kind of fantasy.

It is hard to think of any other artist whose imagery is more obviously suited to examination in terms of Jungian theory; and Mr. Digby, who writes about Munch, Moore, and Nash in just

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these terms is most convincing when he deals with the latter. Even so, his study leaves us with the impression of many i's dotted and t's crossed and no more. We are left in some doubt as to whether, in his hands, Analytical Psychology has altogether yielded up the key to the understanding of "modern art." The shortcoming of his analysis is perhaps that it leaves style out of account and therefore does not give any precision to his picture of Nash as an artist. But, in all fairness, style is not the author's concern; indeed he introduces his study with the suggestion that too great an emphasis on the formal qualities may lead us astray from the "meaning" of art.

Painters, sooner or later, get the commentators they deserve and Mr. Digby's approach to Nash is particularly apt. After all, what was Nash's position? Despite his espousal of cubism, or rather a cubistic formula, during the twenties, and his leading position in Unit One during the early thirties, his attachment to design was more a nostalgia for impersonal and remote effects than an awareness of what design could mean in terms of real content. Therefore it is curious to read the letters exchanged between Nash and Bottomley during the twenties in which they politely disagreed on Post-Impressionism. In Bottomley's eyes the whole affair was a storm in a teacup: ". . . where you see a revolution in vision, I see a change of recipe," and an irrelevant one at that: "In art my Motter is England for the English." The only defence Nash puts up for the French is the observation that they "charm you not so much by actual manners but the state of harmony that results therefrom, a kind of delicious flattery of the æsthetic susceptibilities" (1922). Bottomley returns with "The stupidities in painting that Whistler and Clive call literary are just as stupid and inartistic when they are done in literature; so that I have to look elsewhere for guidance and to become convinced that the solution is in a wider conception of subject matter." This "wider conception of subject matter" was exactly what Nash himself arrived at when he encountered Surrealism during the thirties. At least this latest import gave him the freedom of his old subjects again, and new levels for his romantic illustrations.

In answer to a rather jejune remark of Nash's about "dropping the literary," the old Kendal poet wrote, "Though a picture may be built without any literary references, I believe that inevitable 'literary' references will one day be evolved from it. . . ." Inevitably they are; over the years they pile up until, perhaps by some quantitative-qualitative law of change, we must substitute for "literary" the word "anecdotal."

Andrew Forge

Modern Italian Short Stories. Selected and edited by W. J. STRACHAN. Eyre and Spottiswoode. 15s.

ACCORDING to Matthew Arnold, the great vice of the modern intellect was that it was fantastic and eccentric, that it wanted sanity. But in spite of Arnold, the English have gone on priding themselves on their strong vein of eccentric fantasy, and certainly we are rich enough in examples. But there is something disturbing as well as attractive about this insular characteristic, even for the English reader: and the variety of our fantasy which covers Sterne, Carroll, Lear, and even H. G. Wells, does not hide a common quality which can strike one as morbid. They are all doing an Indian rope-trick and are liable to vanish from solid earth completely.

How is it that English writers who have been attracted by strangeness, eccentricity, absurdity (in the Existentialist sense, too) have so often failed to fuse it with the sense of real life and have floated off into whimsy or science fiction? Why is it that the many who must have been strongly affected by Kafka, have, except perhaps for Mr. William Sansom, failed to digest him and have rejected him? These questions have been suggested by two or three stories in this collection which otherwise strikes me as representative—good, solid, comic, realistic-imaginative with Moravia, and social-conscientious-imaginative with Silone.

The two stories which cause the reflections are "The Auction Sale" by Vera Cacciatore and "The Pursuit" by Riccardo Bacchelli. I mention them because they are in the fantastic vein, but not of higher level than the other stories in the collection. Perhaps it is because they have better digested their Svevo, Kafka, and Musil (among others) that some Continental writers can achieve this fusion of the fantastic and the comic realistic. Is it because they are brought up to take the life of the intellect seriously and can therefore have solid fun with it? Behind the stories I have mentioned is some sort of intellectual generalisation, not very visible, not necessarily sound, but giving a structure which is more important than plot. The Cacciatore generalisation seems to be about the constant struggle and frequent failure of the living to maintain itself against the encroaching inanimate; the Bacchelli story is about the essentially delusive and projective nature of jealousy.

I cannot think of any contemporary English writer who would have hit the nodal point between the general and the particular quite so accurately. The first would have turned into whimsy; the second into mere farce or the satirical description of types.

Kathleen Nott

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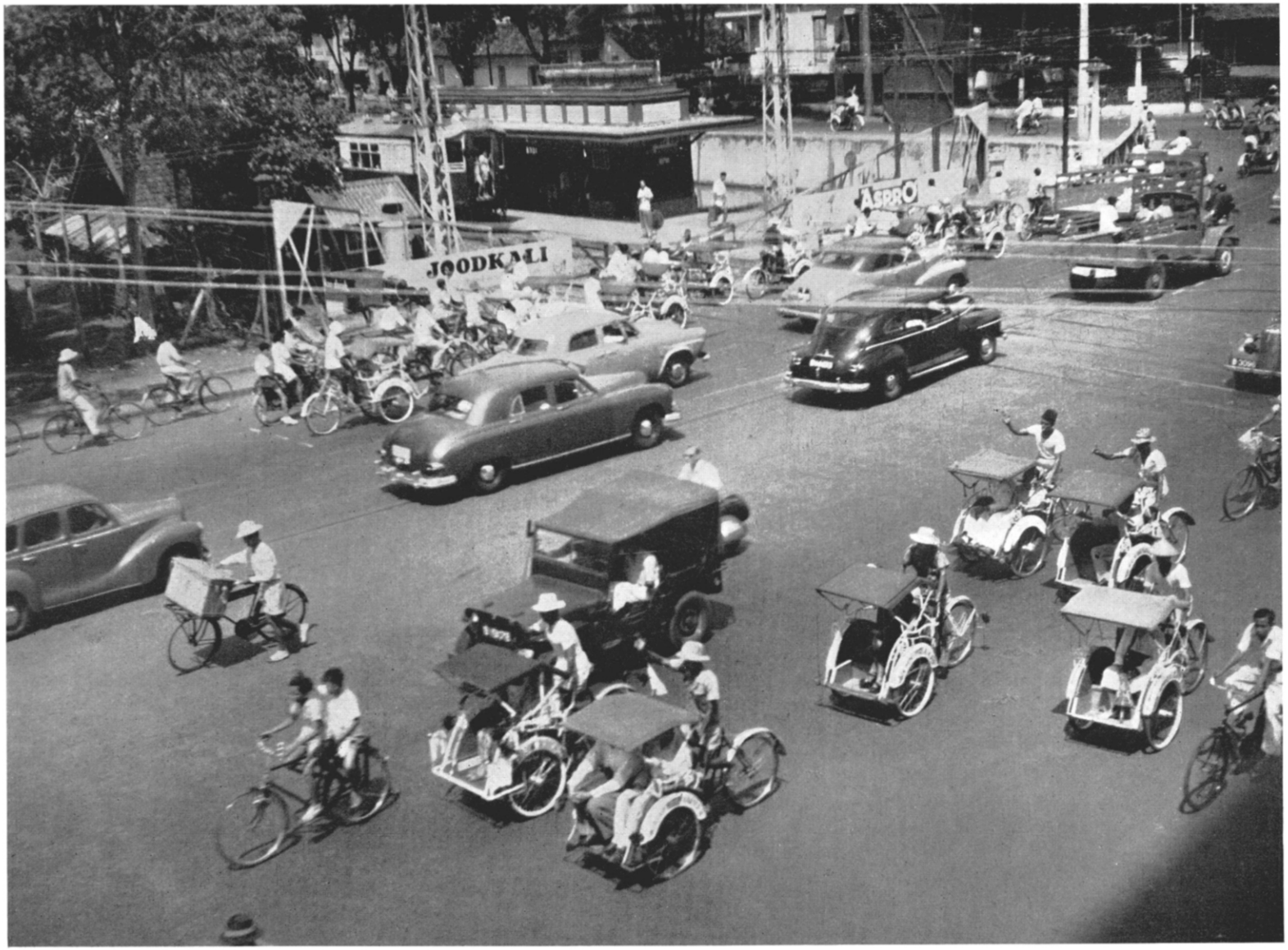

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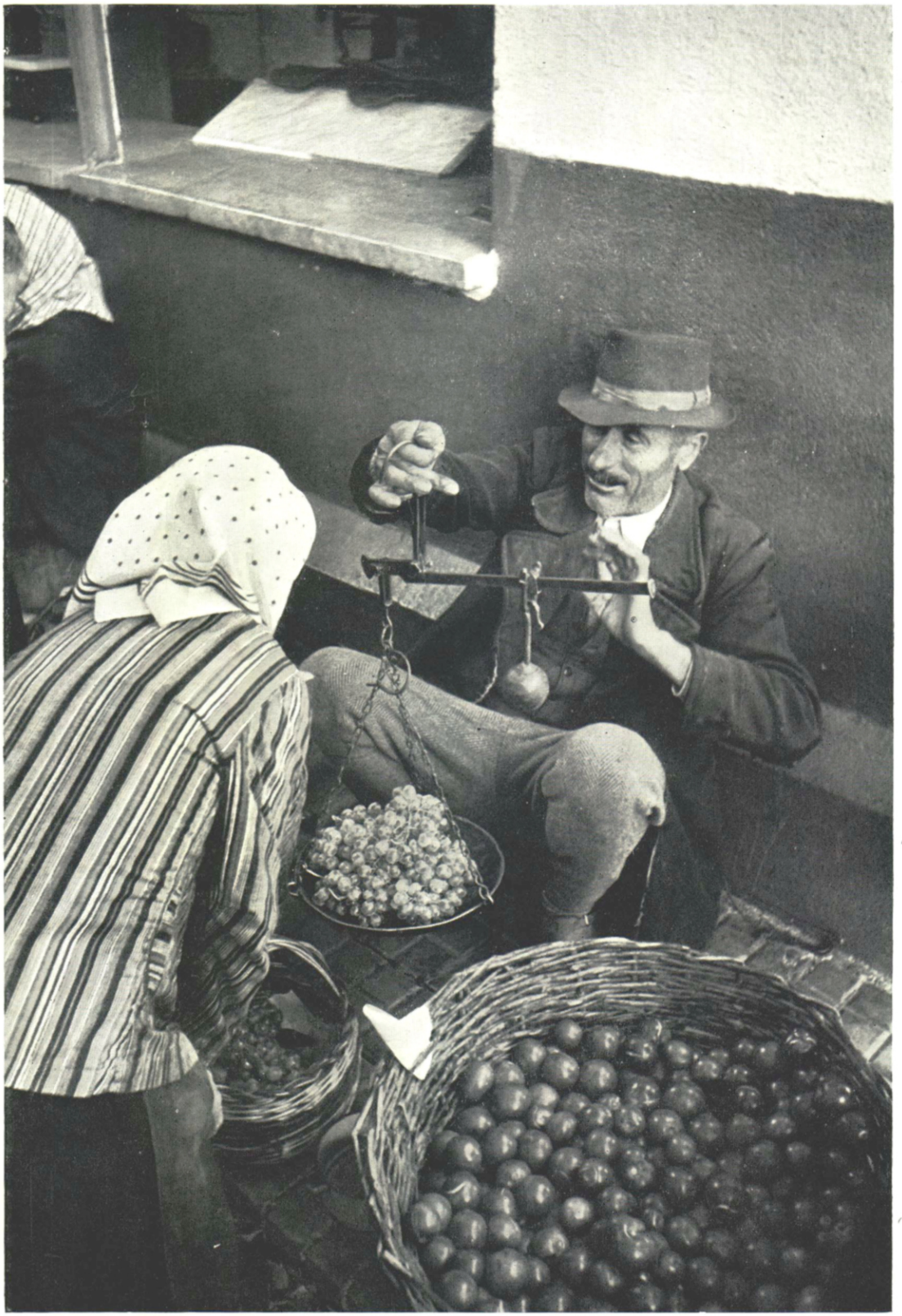

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